

# Video Watchdog®

the Perfectionist's  
Guide to  
Fantastic Video

No. 5 / \$4.50  
May / Jun 1991



The Haunted Worlds of

★ M·A·R·I·O B·A·V·A

How **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** became **BLACK SABBATH!**

★ **BLOOD BATH** —The Version **ROGER CORMAN** Wouldn't Release!

RARITIES • RETITLING • RESTORATIONS



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*"It is impossible, but I—Lucas—will do it!"*

—Nestor Paiva in *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* (1954)

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*or, Francis Ford Coppola's Lost Thriller & How Roger Corman Turned It Into 5 Movies (Part 2)*

The saga of Francis Ford Coppola's Lost Thriller continues as Roger Corman hires the man who saved DEMENTIA 13 to salvage the unreleasable OPERATION: TITIAN. With exclusive commentary by director Jack Hill and star William Campbell!

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Front: The wurdalak Gorka (Boris Karloff) rides off into the night with grandchild Ivan in Mario Bava's **BLACK SABBATH** [*I tre volti della paura*, "The Three Faces of Fear," 1963], available on HBO Video and Image Entertainment laserdiscs.

Inside: Mario Bava as the mischievous Uncle's Portrait in **EVIL EYE** (1962/4), with signature.

Back: The Medium's Ghost—sculpted by Eugenio Bava for **BLACK SABBATH**'s "The Drop of Water" episode.

# KENNEL

**LUCAS BALBO** is VW's French correspondent. He contributed the Introduction to Horror Pictures' MARIO BAVA 2 booklet, and has written for PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO, SHOCK XPRESS, and IMPACT. He is presently on tour in the United States.

**JASON GRAY & DENNIS CAPICIK** publish SUBTERRANEA (\$3.00 from 47 Thorncliffe Park Drive #609, Toronto, Ontario M4H 1J5 Canada), an informative fanzine that regularly reports on Canadian video censorship.

**TIM LUCAS** writes about the "director's cuts" that circulate under and above the video counter in the May/June issue of FILM COMMENT. He is presently organizing the video portion of the 1991 Cattolica Mystfest.

**SIMONE ROMANO** co-edits the Italian-language fanzine BLOOD MANIA (Via Borgo Casoni 9/B, 33170 Pordenone, Italy).

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## VW THANKS:

Samuel Z. Arkoff, Lamberto & Georgia Bava, Gian Piero Brunetta, William & Tereza Campbell, Lorenzo Codelli, David Cronenberg, David Del Valle, Michael Gingold, Jack Hill, Eric Hoffman, Steve Jarvis, Alan Jones, Bill Kelley, Mark Kermode, Charles Kilgore, Craig Ledbetter, Michael Lennick, Maitland McDonagh, Dave Marshall (Marshall Discount Video), Jim & Jane McCabe (The Video Vault), Harriet Medin, Jean-Claude Michel, Gerard Noel, Radomir Perica, Don Shay, Steve Spatt, Dr. S.E. Stetson, Anthony Timpone, Bret Wood, and our contributors, subscribers, and correspondents!

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# THE WATCHDOG BARKS

**E**VERY MONTH OR SO, one or two letters appear in our post office box, asking when my long-promised book, *THE HAUNTED WORLDS OF MARIO BAVA*, will be published. It was first announced in a PHOTON letters column back in 1977, and last mentioned in a FANGORIA letters page in 1984 (where I naively projected a publication date of 1985). "Why," my correspondents ask, "is this book taking so long to see the light of day?"

It's taking longer than you think. Believe it or not, I have been researching, writing, and collecting materials for this book for almost *half my life*. I first embarked on this project in 1975, when my limited knowledge of the subject led me to think that Bava's career could be adequately covered by a single magazine article. Today, I know a good deal more; I've interviewed in depth more than 20 of Bava's family members, friends, and professional associates, and I've finally viewed all of his films—via 16mm prints, television broadcasts, or video-cassettes. I would like to visit Rome to complete my research but, so far, the only publishers receptive to my manuscript haven't offered advances. They've also been unable to provide color printing which, in the case of this *Maestro di colore*, I feel is essential.

My research has only validated what I suspected from the outset: that Mario Bava was not merely a skilled hack, as the English-speaking press has too often portrayed him, but a deeply personal filmmaker whose

meanings have gone unrecognized due to his lifelong reluctance to explain himself or his work to the media. Even greater impediments to a proper assessment of his genius are the scarcity of prints and the little-known fact that most of his best work was drastically revised for the American market. A case in point is his masterpiece ***I tre volti della paura*** ("The Three Faces of Fear," 1963), which American International released in a bastardized version called **BLACK SABBATH** in 1964. After reading this issue's cover story—the first published excerpt from my *Work in Progress*—you'll never see AIP's version again in quite the same way. The piece is accompanied by an eye-popping array of never-before-published stills, courtesy of David Del Valle, Alan Upchurch, and Lamberto Bava.

In answer to your question about our inside front cover, Yes, the autograph is authentic. It was given to me by Lamberto Bava, and is presented here in support of our belief that Mario Bava produced films of remarkable poetry, power, and beauty—worthy of serious attention, and worthy also of a signature.

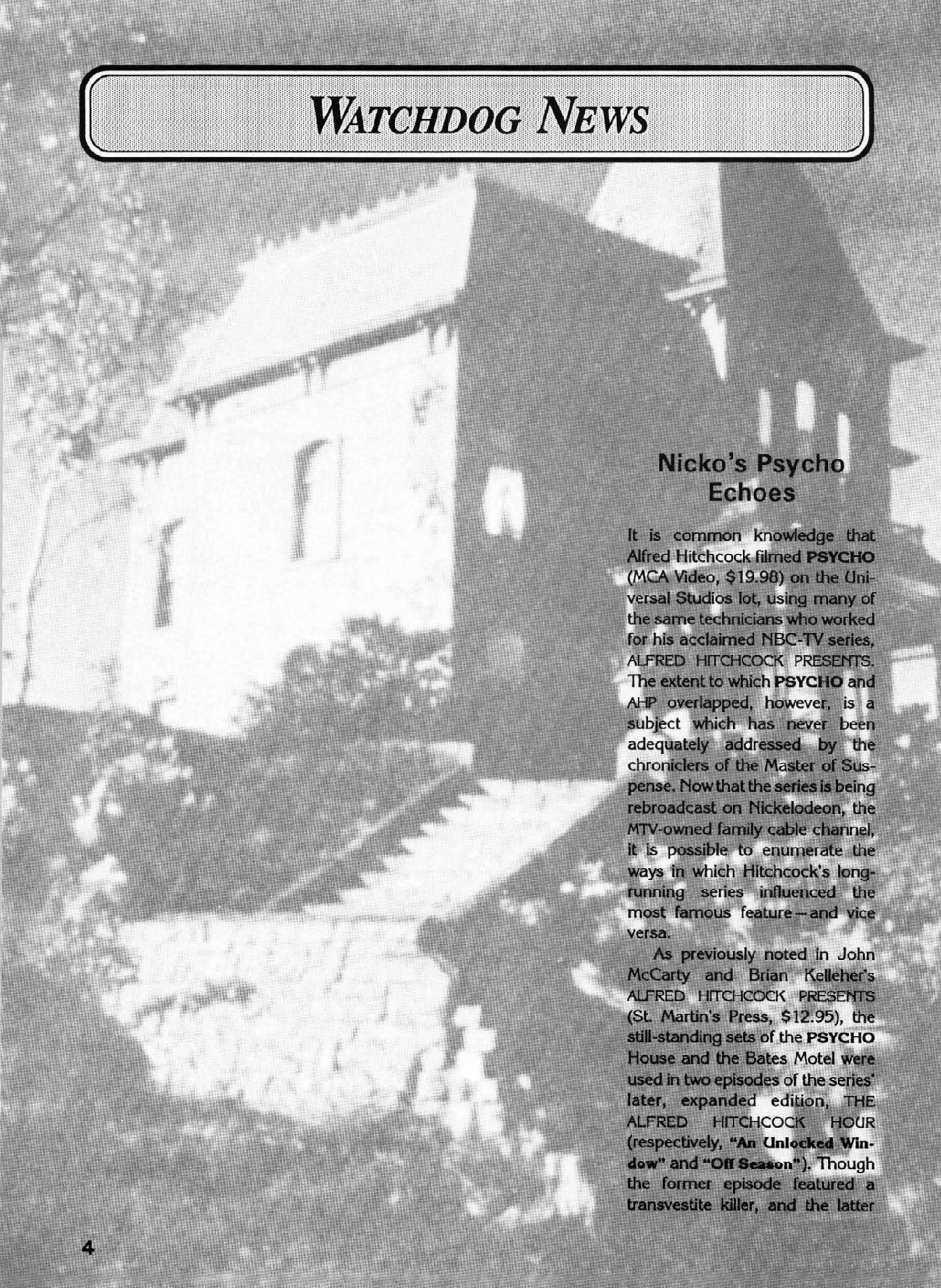
VIDEO WATCHDOG may ultimately become the Bava book's saving grace. Donna and I are having a very good first year and, if our circulation continues to grow, we may find ourselves able to publish THE HAUNTED WORLDS OF MARIO BAVA under our own imprint.

Until then, the time has come, by God, to publish something.

..... *Tim Lucas*

# WATCHDOG NEWS

## Nicko's Psycho Echoes



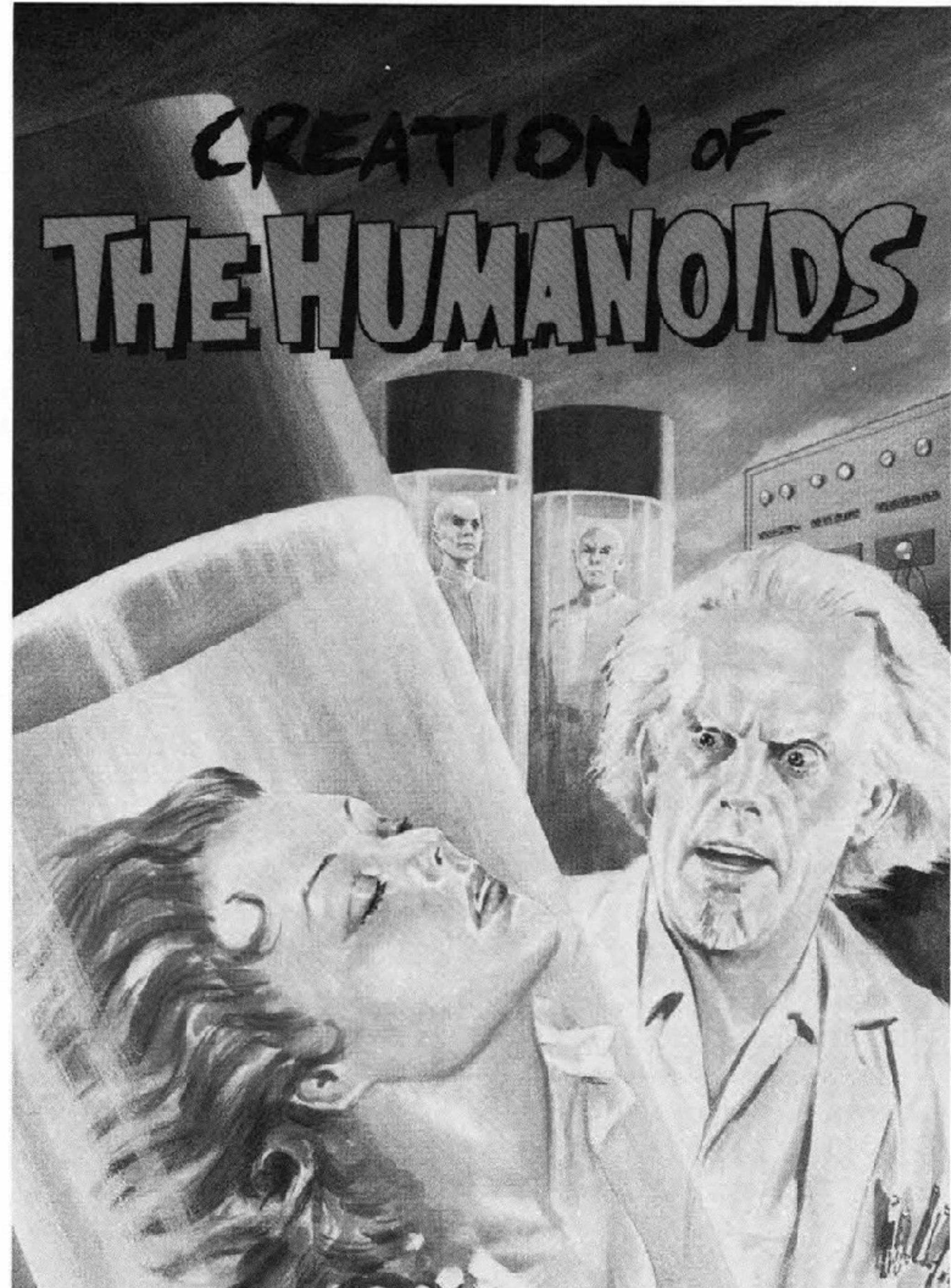
It is common knowledge that Alfred Hitchcock filmed **PSYCHO** (MCA Video, \$19.98) on the Universal Studios lot, using many of the same technicians who worked for his acclaimed NBC-TV series, **ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS**. The extent to which **PSYCHO** and AHP overlapped, however, is a subject which has never been adequately addressed by the chroniclers of the Master of Suspense. Now that the series is being rebroadcast on Nickelodeon, the MTV-owned family cable channel, it is possible to enumerate the ways in which Hitchcock's long-running series influenced the most famous feature—and vice versa.

As previously noted in John McCarty and Brian Kelleher's **ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS** (St. Martin's Press, \$12.95), the still-standing sets of the **PSYCHO** House and the Bates Motel were used in two episodes of the series' later, expanded edition, **THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK HOUR** (respectively, "An Unlocked Window" and "Off Season"). Though the former episode featured a transvestite killer, and the latter

starred **PSYCHO** alumnus John Gavin, the sets were employed as a production convenience—not as homages to the Hitchcock classic. After all, the **PSYCHO** House was by no means limited to Hitchcock's productions; it was also featured in "Masquerade", a 1961 episode of **THRILLER** starring Tom Poston, Elizabeth Montgomery and John Carradine!

The Nickelodeon reruns have been illuminating, to say the least. An episode entitled "**The Schatz-Metterklume Method**" (6/12/60, co-starring **PSYCHO**'s Patricia Hitchcock) was built around a hastily-disguised Bates Mansion; the episode also marks the only time (unbilled) sibling child stars Veronica and Angela Cartwright acted together onscreen. The name "Crane" was given to William Shatner's character in "**Mother, May I Go Out to Swim?**" (4/10/60), an oedipally-obsessed man who pushes his fiancée to her death over a waterfall (under a shower?) for coming between himself and his mother. Even more startling, the episode "**Craig's Will**" (3/6/60) featured a butler named *Sam Loomis*—the name of John Gavin's character in the film! Considering the playdates of these episodes, they must have been shot at Universal simultaneously with **PSYCHO**, which was filmed between November 1959 and February 1960.)

Actor John McIntyre immediately followed his supporting role as the Sheriff in **PSYCHO** with the lead in the PRESENTS episode "**Hitch Hike**" (2/21/60), and Ted Knight (who played the guard at Mother's cell) had a supporting role in the 5/29/60 episode "**Party Line**"—which had the added dis-



Raedon's promotional flyer for **CREATION OF THE HUMANOID** (1962).

tinction of being directed by **PSYCHO**'s assistant director, Hilton A. Green.

Robert Bloch, whose famous novel **PSYCHO** started the whole thing, went on to place a number of teleplays with **ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS**, including two of particular interest. "**Madame Mystery**" (3/27/60) was a California-based tale of madness and matricide, while "**The Landlady**" (2/21/61), based on a story by Roald Dahl, starred Patricia Collinge as a woman who drugs and stuffs the tenants of her boarding house.

## Back to the Drawing Board

We last touched on the question of truthful box art in our premiere issue, where we noted that the advertising art for Luigi Cozzi's **HERCULES** (1983) had given its robotic Hydra the body of the good ship *Narcissus* from **ALIEN**. That short cut is nothing compared to the artwork we've since seen associated with Raedon Video's **CREATION OF THE HUMANOID**.



*A surprise lurks behind the living room wall of Ben Gazzara's in-laws in the rarely-seen **YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME AGAIN** (1959).*

women-in-prison film **WOMEN WITHOUT MEN** (aka **BLONDE BAIT**, 1956), Joel Newton's haunting **JENNIFER** (1953) starring Ida Lupino and photographed by James Wong Howe, and **DUAL ALIBI** (a rare 1947 British National release starring a youthful Herbert Lom as a murderous circus clown).

Of exceptional interest, however, was a British television adaptation of Cornell Woolrich's classic *noir* story, **YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME AGAIN**, starring Ben Gazzara and Leo Genn. According to Francis M. Nevins Jr.'s definitive Woolrich biography **FIRST YOU DREAM, THEN YOU DIE** (The Mysterious Press, \$19.95), this film—directed by Ted Post (uncredited in this presentation)—was aired only once as an episode of ITV's **ARMCHAIR SUMMER THEATRE** in 1959; it was never given a theatrical release in the United States, and had to wait 31 years for its US television debut! After describing the few known facts about this 45m 30s adaptation in his book (published in 1988), Nevins exclaimed, "If only this film were available in the States!" We hope he caught it. Incidentally, Nevins' book speculates a 90m running time for this item but, apart from a few credits, nothing appeared to be missing.

**THE REPUBLIC ALL NITE MOVIE**—which fills out its two-hour timeslots with serial chapters from the likes of **THE MASKED MARVEL**, **THE PERILS OF NYOKA** and **SPY SMASHER**—would do well to rid itself of at least one-third of its seemingly non-stop commercial breaks, but it's heartening anyway to see that someone out there hasn't completely given up on low-budget, black-and-white, simply-stated entertainment.

We're still waiting for some withheld Republic titles to waft

For those unfamiliar with it, **CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS** (1962) is a turgid, emotionless, science fiction film about life in a futuristic, dehumanized society. Leonard Maltin calls it "a movie only an android could love;" Andy Warhol, appropriately, once called it his favorite film of all time. The closest person to a star offered by its unknown, impersonal, and mostly blue-faced cast is Don Megowan, the burly actor who played the Creature (after surgery) in Universal's **THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US**. Raedon Video announced their release of this iffy, challenging, cult item with artwork depicting a mad scientist fashioning an android in a futuristic laboratory setting. But wait a minute! Something's Rotwang in the state of Denmark: the scientist pictured is none other than actor Christopher Lloyd, in his role as "Doc" in the immensely popular **BACK TO THE FUTURE** series!

## All Nite Alrite

The Watchdog heartily recommends Republic Pictures' **ALL NITE MOVIE**, currently in TV syndication via Tele-Scene Pictures Inc. In our local market (WLWT, Cincinnati's NBC affiliate), the ANM runs Monday through Thursday at 3:00 am. While the majority of their feature film fare tends toward B-westerns, there have been enough outstanding rarities amid its lineup to reward tuning in. For example, we caught **THE HORRIBLE DR. HITCHCOCK** (1962, Riccardo Freda's seldom-televised *paen* to necrophilia and Barbara Steele), **HIGHWAY DRAGNET** (1954, Roger Corman's first film—he's credited with the story, and as associate producer), **NEW ORLEANS AFTER DARK** (1958, a Big Sleazy homicide anthology with surprising dollops of gore), Arch Oboler's **STRANGE HOLIDAY** (1942), in which Claude Rains awakens to find America overtaken by fascism, Hammer's rare

along, like Fritz Lang's **HOUSE BY THE RIVER** (1950)...

While we're on the subject of Republic Pictures, beware of Goodtimes Video's recent packaging of **RADAR MEN FROM THE MOON** (1952). Supposedly containing the entire 12-chapter serial on one cassette, the tape kicks into rewind after the 9th chapter!

[Thanks to Mike Barrett of Universal City, Texas for additional information.]

## Retitlings

**CHILD OF SATAN** (Olympus, \$39.98) is **TO THE DEVIL—A DAUGHTER** (1976), an adaptation of Dennis Wheatley's famous occult novel and the last Hammer Film Production ("to date," as the hopeful are inclined to add). The excellent cast includes Christopher Lee, Richard Widmark, Honor Blackman, Denholm Elliott, and Nastassja Kinski (doing glimpsish full-frontal nudity at 15). Directed by Peter Sykes, whose previous films **THE LEGEND OF SPIDER FOREST** (Media/OP) and **DEMONS OF THE MIND** (retitled **BLOOD EVIL** on Academy Video, \$19.95) inspired faith in him at the time as one of the Great White Hopes of British Horror; unfortunately, by the time he was up to speed, there was no horror industry to support him.

**THE HIDEAWAYS** (Warners, \$59.95) is better-known under the more cumbersome title **FROM THE MIXED-UP FILES OF MRS. BASIL E. FRANK-**

**WEILER**, also the title of the award-winning children's book on which it is based. This 1973 fantasy, about two children (Sally Prager and Johnny Doran) who run away from home to live in New York's Metropolitan Museum and become intrigued by the origins of a mysterious statue, was directed by Fielder Cook. The adult cast features Ingrid Bergman, Richard Mulligan, and Madeleine Kahn.

**THE HOUSE OF THE INSANE WOMEN** (Sinister Cinema, \$19.95) is Rafael Moreno Alba's *Las Melancolicas* ("The Sad Women," 1971) which, on the strength of one brief climactic sequence in which a free-thinking woman is "exorcised" by public officials, was released in the States shortly after the **EXORCIST** craze as **EXORCISM'S DAUGHTER!** More to the point, it's an overt critique of Spanish conformity under the Franco regime, as a liberal physician (Espartaco Santoni), given the director's own name, attempts to ease conditions at a women's mental institution in a conservative, power-abusive village. Helga Liné is listed in the credits, but we couldn't spot her; also, Carlos Aured (**HORROR RISES FROM THE TOMB**, **HOUSE OF PSYCHOTIC WOMEN**) is credited as assistant director.

**THE MUTILATOR** (Impulse, \$39.98) is John "Bud" Cardos' **THE DARK**, a 1979 item about an alien's California killing spree starring William Devane and Cathy Lee Crosby. Reportedly includes some footage shot by its original (replaced) director, Tobe

Hooper. It's still available from Media Home Entertainment for \$19.95.

**THE GAMES LOVERS PLAY**, broadcast last September on Showtime, was shown a couple of years ago on Cinemax under its original title **LADY CHATTERLEY MEETS FANNY HILL**. It's a very softcore British fantasy in which the two literary heroines are reincarnated as hookers in mid-70's London, engaged in a seduction bet to win a prized piece of territory for their home turf. It stars Joanna Lumley ("Purdy" of **THE NEW AVENGERS**) and **LAUGH-IN** alumnus Jeremy Lloyd.

**HUNCHBACK** (Vidmark, \$89.98) condenses only the title of Michael Tuchner's superb 1982 film of **THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME**, starring Anthony Hopkins as Quasimodo and Lesley-Anne Down as Esmeralda. Though originally broadcast on NBC's "Hallmark Hall of Fame," it was shot on film and is comparably lavish with MGM's classic 1939 production with Charles Laughton.

**THE REVENGE OF DRACULA** (Duravision, \$39.98) is Al Adamson's **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN** (1971), which was recently released under its original title in an authorized, cheaper edition by VidAmerica's World's Worst Videos (\$14.95).

**TERROR HOSPITAL** (Marathon, \$39.95) is Al Adamson's **NURSE SHERRI**, previously released by VidAmerica's World's Worst Videos as **HOSPITAL OF TERROR**.





## Video Around the World

### U.S.A.

#### *From Eastern Dreams to Herbert West*

##### AKIRA KUROSAWA'S DREAMS

1990, Warner, HF/DS/LB, \$92.95

This relentlessly photogenic album—a coffee table book on film, so to speak—collects eight dreams experienced by Kurosawa throughout his life: "Sunshine Inside the Rain," about the surreal consequences of boyhood disobedience; "The Peach Orchard," in which a child's love of nature permits a glimpse into the florid past; "The Blizzard...," a spiritual descendent of the "Woman of the Snow" segment of **KWAIDAN**; "The Tunnel," in which a released prisoner of war comes to terms with his guilt for surviving the battle in which the troops he commanded lost their lives; "Crows," the film's outstanding episode, in which an aspiring young artist attending a Van Gogh exhibit steps into the paintings for a cryptic encounter with the artist himself (Martin Scorsese!); "Mount Fuji in Red," a nuclear

apocalypse scenario (in which creative consultant Ishiro **GODZILLA** Honda's hand is most strongly felt); "The Weeping Demon," a semi-sequel to "Fuji" in which two nuclear survivors (a man and a demon) discuss their mutilated world; and the sublime "Village of the Watermills," which closes the film with a plea for a return to nature. If we learn anything of Kurosawa from this film, it is that he loves the potential of life so much that the reality of living has made him unhappy. What little dialogue there is, tends to be overwrought, urgent, and preachy, sadly compromising the

#### KEY

CC	Closed Captioned
D	Digital
DS	Digital Stereo
HF	Hi-Fi
LB	Letterboxed
LD	Laserdisc
S	Stereo
SS-S	Surround Sound Stereo

*Compiled by Lucas Balbo (France), Dennis Capicik and Jason Gray (Canada),  
Simone Romano (Italy), Erik Sulev (Asian-American), and the Video Watchdog*



*A dead platoon awaits orders from their surviving officer in AKIRA KUROSAWA'S DREAMS (1990).*

weightlessness of these vignettes, hence their believability as dreams. The film is less pleasing as an ecological petition than as a parade of resplendent images, some shown resonating from dream to dream, raising smiles and echoes to pursue in his other work. Not major Kurosawa, but presented here with the maximum respect of widescreen framing (1.66:1, matting the original 1.85:1) and a deliciously plaintive digital stereo track. If only CBS/Fox had mastered their cassettes of **RAN** this well!

### **BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR**

1989, *LIVE, HF/S, \$89.95*

Brian Yuzna's second film is the first to appear in his home country; his first feature, **SOCIETY** (1988), has been available on Japanese cassettes for over a year, but remains unavailable here. This sequel to Stuart Gordon's 1985 cult favorite (which Yuzna co-produced) is disappointing on several counts: it doesn't begin where Gordon ended, it doesn't satisfactorily explain Megan Halsey's fate, nor does the decapitated Dr. Hill (David Gale)'s

pre-credits promise of a battle royale with Herbert West (Jeffrey Combs) ever quite materialize. The treble-authored screenplay takes a misguided, early detour into Claude Earl Jones' private investigation into the eight month-old Miskatonic Massacre; when the storyline returns in the final stretch to the creation of the title character (Kathleen Kinmont), with its underthreadings of Dan Cain (Bruce Abbott)'s inability to accept Meg Halsey's death, things not only perk-up appreciably, they deepen with meaning. Unfortunately, Yuzna seems to have been

as ill-at-ease with dramatic poignancy as with directing actors; most of the film's emotional moments are quickly compromised with verbal/visual puns or awful, precious, mugging line-readings. The Bride herself, despite the repulsively sexist descriptions of her donors ("the legs of a streetwalker... the womb of a virgin cut down before sampling the pleasures of Life..."), is a glorious creature to behold; a comely complement to the Monster in Corman's **FRANKENSTEIN UN-BOUNDED**. The film's most interesting plot development—the revelation that West's reagent creates a psychic link between its subjects—is glossed over, in favor of more Burroughsian anatomical collages à la **SOCIETY**. The end

credits offer "Special Thanks To Mary Wollenscraft Shelly" (sic). The screener we viewed featured very erratic stereo sound (most of it was Hi-Fi mono). Available in R and unrated versions; there is a difference of only 6s between them, which LIVE could not identify and which we could not find.

### CLUB EXTINCTION

1989, Prism, HF/S, \$89.95 (VHS), \$29.95 (Beta)

Retitled for its American debut, this is Claude Chabrol's **DR. M**, a fashionably nihilistic *homage* to Fritz Lang's "Doctor Mabuse" series, set in a vaguely futuristic but unspecified Berlin where the Wall still exists. The city is beset by a rash of suicides be-

lieved to be virally-induced, which a young detective (Jan Niklas)—still coming to terms with his own wife's earlier suicide—eventually connects with a malevolent campaign of subliminal messages broadcast by a passive beauty (Jennifer Beals) from the city's video billboards. Apart from Beals, whose iconic presence seems a natural extension of her facial performance in **FLASH-DANCE**, this is a wildly miscast production. Alan Bates stars as media magnate Dr. Marsfeldt (not "Mabuse"), whose attempts at wicked charm seem an eccentric parody of his **WOMEN IN LOVE** routine. Brat Packer Andrew McCarthy appears in a disorienting throwaway bit as "Assassin." Wolfgang Preiss, the German ac-

*Always a Best Man, never a Groom: Jeffrey Combs as Herbert West and Kathleen Kinmont as the BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR (1989).*



tor who essayed the Mabuse role in Lang's **THE THOUSAND EYES OF DR. MABUSE** (1960) and several sequels in the 1960's, is on hand as one of the supporting players—which may help to remind some that this *hommage* is a good deal more vital, imaginative, and well-produced than its immediate predecessors. Prism's retitling is derived from Marsfeldt's discotheque, *Extinction!*, where the city's young thrash away to tuneless paroxysms of sound (by Mekong Delta) as footage of mushroom clouds is projected on the walls; in clichéd moments like these, the film ceases to be about life's devaluation by the media, becoming instead a showcase for the deathless complaint that youth is wasted on the young.

### THE EXORCIST III

1990, CBS/Fox, HF/S, \$92.98

William Peter Blatty wrote and directed this sequel, based on his best-selling novel **LEGION**, which follows Lt. Kinderman (George C. Scott replacing the late Lee J. Cobb) on his investigation of the renewed serial slayings of the (supposedly deceased) Gemini Killer. In his attempts to pursue, understand and destroy the motivating evil behind these slayings, the Rushmore-faced detective is led to an asylum inmate (Jason Miller and Brad Dourif) who may or may not be the demon-inhabited wreckage of Damien Karras. Inconsistencies abound—Kinderman refers to Karras as his "best friend," though it was with Father Dyer that he began a beautiful friendship at the close of the original film; the killer's tactic of leaving misspelled messages with double L's (as in 'It's a Wonderfull Life') is never resolved; a Joker-faced Saint appears in the periphery of one shot without explanation, et cetera—and Blatty appears to be more in love with



*Nick Bramble teaches John Hurt that some men are born victims, while others have it thrust upon them in **FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND** (1990).*

Georgetown scenery and the sound of his own voice, than with telling his story visually. However, this talkative film does manage to ask some interesting questions and gives its audience credit for having the intelligence to ponder them on their own time. The eternal questions are wisely leavened with humor (Scott Wilson's comic performance steals the film), and there is at least one *great* scare. The film's predominantly dark cinematography causes CBS/Fox's Macrovision to strobe like crazy, making the tape an annoying viewing experience. We advise viewing this title on disc or pay-per-view only.

### FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND

1990, CBS/Fox, HF/S, \$89.98

Roger Corman's directorial comeback—his first film since the underrated **VON RICHTHOFEN AND BROWN** (1971)—isn't quite the personal film he's been promising all these years, but rather an

idiosyncratic adaptation of Brian Aldiss' novel of the same name. The film begins abruptly but well, with future scientist John Hurt sourly coping with his creation of a scar-like cloud which storms to cause unpredictable shifts in time; the science fiction is handled seriously, and its accelerated pace is captivating. The film's ambition stumbles, however, as it ventures into the past. When Hurt is sucked through his time window and encounters Dr. Frankenstein (Raul Julia) and his Monster (Nick Bramble), he doesn't question whether he may have crossed an *imaginary* border as well; also, he never seems the least bit surprised that Mary Shelley née Godwin (Bridget Fonda) based her famous "novel" on neighborhood goings-on, nor does he confront her on the subject! Aside from these logical faults, some historical inaccuracies, and the fact that Ms. Godwin inexplicably disappears after offering our hero some of the "free love" she practices, the film showcases one of the most

successful Monsters ever designed in faith to the novel (by Nick Dudman), and several Cormanesque dream sequences that will leave everyone over 30 wearing ineffable, silly, nostalgic grins. Handsomely produced in Italy, amusingly miscast and full of nonsense. The screener we viewed was occasionally over-dark—Macrovision and day-for-night photography just don't mix—and taken from an intermittently scratched print.

## HENRY AND JUNE

1990, MCA, HF/DS/CC, Rental Only

This biographical portrait (circa 1931) of the American expatriate writer Henry Miller; the Dutch/Spanish diarist Anaïs Nin, and Miller's wife June (who stimulated both their imaginations) is not fantasy-oriented, but is included here for two reasons: 1) it is the first NC-17 feature released on tape and demands the support of any publication concerned with the rights of free artistic expression, and 2) because it *should* have been fantasy-oriented. Director Philip Kaufman has consistently proven himself a gifted filmmaker, but this is easily the least interesting of his mature films to date. Though well-crafted on all counts and unfalteringly atmospheric, *H&J* not only fails to elucidate the motivating passions of the characters under its scrutiny but, contrary to its reputation as a masterpiece of eroticism, is pretty weak tea. Cast for her resemblance to Uma Thurman, French sex star Brigitte Lahaie appears as "Henry's Whore" (20th billing), smiling with unmistakably catty condescension at what these crazy Americans find sexy. Fred Ward and Maria de Madeiros are perfectly cast, but Kaufman's script reduces them to two neurotic opposites so intent on screwing their way to a common ground



that they can't be straight with one another—about art or themselves. On the positive side, this is one great-sounding tape; Alan Splet (best known for his collaborations with David Lynch) deserves recognition for his valuable contribution to this film's heady ambience. Also available on laser-disc, letterboxed to retain its Panavision framing (Side 3 in CAV), for \$39.98.

## JACK THE GIANT KILLER

1962, MGM/UA, \$19.98

No, you're not suffering from *déjà vu*; this film resembles *THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD*

in every possible way, from its similar stop-motion creature designs to its identical lead actors (heroic Kerwin Matthews and villainous Torin Thatcher) and director (Nathan Juran)! Story has it that **SINBAD** producers Charles Schneer and Ray Harryhausen thought so, too, and brought suit against the producers of this film, whose only legal recourse was to turn **JACK** into something **SINBAD** was clearly not: a *musical*. The original version was excellent juvenile entertainment, with a host of unforgettable moments and monsters (courtesy of stop-mo wizards Wah Chang and Jim Danforth). The musical reissue,



*Childhood friends Axel Jodorowsky and Sabrina Dennison are touchingly reunited in Jodorowsky's *SANTA SANGRE* (1989).*

particularly for viewers familiar with the banished cut, is a winceful viewing experience indeed, with dialogue repeated in random loops over shapeless music until they resemble unrhyming song lyrics! One song unfolds at the side of a ship, where the looped ocean waves visible beyond the "singing" virtually induces seasickness! It would almost be funny if this travesty didn't represent such a genuine loss.

### NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

1990, RCA/Columbia, HF/S, \$N/A

Of course it's not as good as the original but, compared to the legion of unofficial remakes in circulation, Tom Savini's directorial debut easily ranks with pictures like **BREAKFAST AT THE MANCHESTER MORGUE** as one of the best two or three knock-offs around. The plot remains essentially unchanged, apart from a series of deliberate "surprises" to

keep the situation dangerously unpredictable, the most valuable of which is the emergence of the formerly catatonic Barbara (Patricia Tallman) as a fiery, prepared combatant. What's missing from the film isn't memorable performances, bloody violence, or even historical context (this film's heightening of the war indoors makes a very 90's statement); in the original, you could taste the filmmakers' zest and hunger for success but, here, there's a doggedness and bitterness that goes deeper than predictability and doesn't quite lift until the story arrives at its *denouement*. The film comes to life with a masterful coda—so honest you can scarcely believe its presence in a major studio release—that makes this remake more at home within the "Zombie Trilogy" than the original ever was; Tallman emerges here as another of the series' resilient and conscientious heroines, pointing the way toward **DAWN OF THE DEAD**. Interestingly, the

tape reincorporates a line of dialogue deleted from the finale in theatrical prints: "We're them and they're us." The line shouldn't be necessary, but it is, because she's right. Bill "Chilly Billy" Cardille reprises his original role as "TV Interviewer."

### SANTA SANGRE

1989, Republic, HF/S, \$89.98

Alejandro Jodorowsky's films do not "defy criticism" (as the **EL TOPO** one-sheets proclaimed), but they do possess a primal poetry that is fulfilled in their imaging in ways that, at their best, defy language. This, Jodorowsky's first film since the seldom-seen **TUSK** (1979) and his most masterful, tells the story of Fenix (Axel Jodorowsky), a child magician traumatized when his mother loses her arms in a sordid circus episode. Fenix grows to a troubled maturity, using this past violence as the basis of a weird cabaret act; offstage, his mother (his partner in



the act) compels him to kill the women who arouse him, while he struggles to recover a personality long eclipsed by those of his parents. Jodorowsky uses his scenario likewise, to question whether it is possible for a person to simultaneously be a true artist and to be absolutely free. In its second hour, the film succumbs to its own influencing, by Whale's **THE INVISIBLE MAN** and the Mexican **SANTO** films; Fenix's therapeutic use of Whale's film as a psychodrama in which to recover his visibility is not only heavy-handed, but mentioned in the dialogue *before* it occurs; in the second case, the English dubbers missed the jokey reference intended by the masked (and unconvincingly female) wrestler "Santa," hence translated here as "The Saint." These touches fail not only by their botched presentation, but because they stand out like pressed flowers in an otherwise resplendent bouquet. Besides, the real *hommage* here is to Hitchcock's **PSYCHO**—and it's the best reinvention of that mythology since Ken Russell's **CRIMES OF PASSION** (1984). Beautifully crafted by all departments; a near-masterpiece. Republic informs us that only 30s was removed from the film (Concha's mutilation), but their press release claims a loss of 3m, which is enough to relieve the film (and Fenix) of all their motivating, traumatic episodes. This is one film to be seen full-strength or not at all. Forthcoming on laser-disc for \$29.98

*Barbara Steele goes topless in this rare, behind-the-scenes shot from Mario Bava's **BLACK SUNDAY** (1960).*

## Laserdiscs

### **BLACK SUNDAY** • **BLACK SABBATH**

1960/1964, HBO/Image, \$59.98

Although pressed in Japan, this two-disc set contains the AIP versions of both these Mario Bava classics. **BLACK SUNDAY**, never given an official US video release, is 2m shorter than its original cut (available on Toshiba tapes and discs in Japan as **THE MASK OF SATAN**, in a nice 1.85:1 transfer), which included graphic images of Kruvajan being staked through his eye and Prince Vajda's face roasting in the fireplace, as well as a romantic exterior scene of Barbara Steele and John Richardson sharing confidences at a fountain. For a detailed description of the changes incurred by **BLACK SABBATH**, see this issue's cover story.

### **CIRCUS OF HORRORS** • **BARON BLOOD**

1959/1972, HBO/Image, \$59.98

As reported in VW 2:7, Sidney Hayers' sensational **CIRCUS OF HORRORS** was sped-up for its video release on Thorn/EMI cassettes from 91m 20s to 87m 42s to fit onto T-90 cassettes. Without the time restriction imposed on its laserdisc release, it is feasible that this disc will restore the film to its original speed. As for Bava's **BARON BLOOD**, HBO's transfer is pretty good (once you forgive its



post-credits pan and scan framing) and, contrary to popular speculation, not a toned-down edition. AIP interfered with this title only to tighten its pace and to replace its original Stelvio Cipriani "travelogue-style" score with a more ominously atmospheric soundtrack by Les Baxter.

### THE HAUNTED PALACE • THE CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ALTAR

1963/1970, HBO/Image, \$59.95

**THE HAUNTED PALACE**, Roger Corman's third (alleged) Poe film, is creeping onto laser-disc without prior release on videocassette. Based on H.P. Lovecraft's "The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward," this film's visual glory—as with most of the Poe titles—is all but lost when viewed in a pan and scan transfer like this, but it features one of Vincent Price's best horror performances, Lon Chaney's last respectable screen appearance, and perhaps the best of all Poe scores (by the late Ronald Stein). Its co-feature, **THE CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ALTAR**, was originally released by AIP as **THE CRIMSON CULT**; the image and vocal tracks are derived from a European source print, which includes an additional 2m of footage—never before seen in America—of miscellaneous jiggle in the party scene. None of the added footage includes Boris Karloff, Christopher Lee, or Barbara Steele. As happened with several latter-day AIP titles on HBO Video, Peter Knight's original score is replaced here with a synthesized soundtrack by LA musician Kendall Schmidt, which is musically one of the more successful substitutions imposed on the later AIP titles by HBO.



*Lon Chaney in a nicely Lovecraftian publicity shot for THE HAUNTED PALACE (1963).*

### THE TOMB OF LIGEIA • THE CONQUEROR WORM

1966/1968, HBO/Image, \$59.95

**LIGEIA**, featuring Robert Towne's first great screenplay, is another sad example of a wide-screen film whose visual achievements have been foreshortened by a pan and scan transfer, making tender closeups appear invasive and causing particular harm to Arthur Grant's ravishing landscape photography. Michael Reeves' final masterpiece **THE CONQUEROR WORM** (aka **WITCHFINDER GENERAL**) is captured here in its European version, which is essentially the same length with certain tavern scenes

rephotographed to include topless, ale-guzzling wenches in the periphery. You'll also see here a good deal of searing bloodshed that is never shown intact on television. Unfortunately, as the Watchdog first reported in **GORE-ZONE #1**, Paul Ferris' original orchestral score—so stirring, chilling, and heroic—was wiped by HBO (who wanted to avoid negotiations for video rights to the original music) and replaced with a thin, inappropriately modernistic, synth score by Kendall Schmidt. The new music saps the film of its original power, and remains the most outrageous profanation of a classic title we've seen.

## Asian-American (NTSC)

*The following is a selective sampler of the many "hopping vampire" movies exported by the Hong Kong film industry since the mid-1980's. The best (and best-known) of these films are those which form Golden Harvest's "Mr. Vampire" quartet. Also included in this list are a couple of better rip-offs plentifully produced by competing studios. All of the titles listed below are distributed in Canada by Jade Video, and can be found in Asian-American stores in the United States on the Rainbow Video label. Most of the films in this subgenre are at least entertaining, but the consumer should be warned that the field is also glutted with such unsubtitled, comedy-heavy, shot-on-video clunkers as **VAMPIRE LIVES AGAIN** and **VAMPIRE STRIKES BACK**.*

### New Letterbox Pressings on Laser

- ARACHNOphobia**  
MCA, \$39.95
- CHINATOWN**  
Paramount, \$49.95
- DRACULA**  
1979 version, MCA, \$39.95
- FLATLINERS**  
RCA/Columbia, \$39.95
- MYSTERY TRAIN**  
Orion, \$39.95
- WHATEVER HAPPENED  
TO BABY JANE?**  
Warner, \$39.95

*A succubus fights for the right to love Ricky Hui in MR. VAMPIRE (1985).*



## MR. VAMPIRE

1985

Hong Kong superstar Ricky Hui, flanked by a dimwitted partner (Chin Sui-Ho) and harried Sifu Master (Lam Ching-ying), combats the resurrected corpse of a wealthy nobleman. A hapless police officer further complicates matters by getting in their way as he tries to woo a storekeeper's daughter. The film pivots, however, on Hui's seduction by a beautiful ghost, who displays some bizarre talents before deciding she loves Ricky enough to let him live his life unhaunted. An incredible display of horror, comedy, and martial arts, this remains the finest example of Hong Kong's "hopping vampire" films, in which the evil beings are periodically repelled by the positive forces in the earth. Find this subtitled Cantonese version and learn why it's good to have an ample amount of sticky rice on hand! Directed by Liu Kun-Wai.

## MR. VAMPIRE II

1986

This first of three sequels (so far) updates the action to contemporary Hong Kong, with most of the original cast returning in new roles. The film betrays its inherent possibilities with a blatant pandering to cuteness, introducing an undead child searching for his vampire parents, whose whining brings a widower and his children closer together. The overwhelmingly huge success of this film in Japan resulted in a similarly styled TV series, and enforced the appearance by a "kiddie-korpse" in virtually every hopping vampire

film that followed. Director Sung Kan Shing stages some great stunts, however, as the vampire parents create more than a few problems in downtown Hong Kong.

### MR. VAMPIRE III

1987

Hong Kong goofball Richard Ng (the invisibility "expert" in **WINNERS AND SINNERS**, 1983) adds some brightness to this noticeably darker, gorier sequel, directed by Wong Kee Hung. Previous cast members return to turn-of-the-century China to battle a vicious demoness and her undead army. The hapless Ng, assisted by two friendly vampires, gets more than he bargained for, when he gets caught between the Demoness and the villagers he most recently cheated. Lucky for him, the local Sifu and his two inept

students arrive to save the village and distract attention from the two-bit crook. This Cantonese tape has no subtitles, but minimal plot and maximum thrills make it easy to follow. An efficient blend of humor and horror.

### MR. VAMPIRE IV

1988

Humor returns to the forefront in this outing, which lacks the sappiness of **II**, but also the "bite" of **I** and **III**. Much of the film's comedy is physical in nature, derived from the antagonism of two rival Sifus, who attack one another in startling ways. One possesses the body of his rival and extracts his own teeth with pliers, while the other attaches his rival's soul to a Roman Candle, causing his body to fly about the room, colliding with as many hard objects as comedy will allow. Amid these

shenanigans, a vampire eventually does appear, wreaking havoc with a travelling group of Chinese nobles, and presenting China with its first Gay vampire. Good news: Ricky Hui (star of **I**) returns to spice things up with his excellent martial arts and stunt choreography. In Cantonese, no subtitles.

### NEW MR. VAMPIRE

1986

Director Xen Lung Ting's attempt to duplicate the success of the Golden Harvest series generally succeeds in what it sets out to do. Focusing more on thrills and comedy than horror, the plot follows the plight of Ricky Hui, whose soul becomes fused with that of the ghost of a woman who preferred to commit suicide than marry a dictatorial army officer. Chaos ensues, and a vampire is eventually tossed into the mix. In

*Does this Spanish starlet find THE HORRIBLE SEXY VAMPIRE too horrible, or too sexy?*



Cantonese, no subtitles. Also available in an English-dubbed version called **KUNG FU VAMPIRE BUSTER**.

## NEW MR. VAMPIRE II

1987

An okay sequel that surmounts a tendency to fall back on a lot of jokes and situations that have popped (and hopped) up elsewhere before, with a couple of brow-raising surprises. The over-familiar plot involves a wizened Sifu, flanked by two bungling protégés, alternately battling an undead villain and looking for love. The Kung Fu stunts are handled sloppily, but the final 15m are crazy enough to hold almost anyone's interest. Surprisingly, there is some brief nudity, which almost never appears in the hopping vampire films, as they are intended as family fare in Hong Kong. The other surprise—an explicit urination scene—is presented in good humor, but doesn't translate very well as such. Directed by Mason Ching. In Cantonese, with English subtitles.

## Canada

### LE AMANTI DEL MOSTRO

(*The Loves of a Monster*)  
General Video Recording

Klaus Kinski stars as the insane Dr. Nijinsky, brainwashed by a device in an inherited laboratory into perpetuating the brutal murders of its previous owner, Dr. Rassimov. Directed by Sergio Garrone of **S.S. EXPERIMENTS** infamy, this film was shot back-to-back with **La Mano che nutre la morte** ("The Hand that Nourished Death," 1974), an **EYES WITHOUT A FACE** retread which shared not only the same cast and

crew, but many of the same inspired character names! Marginally better than its companion piece, this Italian-language version unfortunately suffers from unusually poor transfer quality, hampering what little entertainment value this film has. Makeup effects by Carlo Rambaldi.

### L'ASSASSINO HA RISERVATO NOVE POLTRONE

(*The Killer Reserved Nine Seats*)  
Mondial Video, \$24.95

A little-known *giallo* item directed by Giuseppe Bennetti. Good atmosphere and a cast including such familiar faces as Chris Avram (**BAY OF BLOOD**), Paola Senatore (**THE EMERALD JUNGLE** aka **EATEN ALIVE BY CANNIBALS**), and Fulci favorite Janet Agren. No English language version is currently unavailable in the domestic video market, but this uncut Italian version can be purchased from Master Video Productions in Toronto, Ontario. Call (416) 534-6121 for further information. Ask for their catalogue!

### SEXY NIGHT REPORT

Intercontinental Video

Hostess Laura Gemser takes the viewer on a world-wide tour of nightclubs to explore how sex and pornography are celebrated by different cultures. One of the alledged documentary sequences is actually a scene lifted from the '70s American comedy **CAN I DO IT TILL I NEED GLASSES?** This is not, as first glance might suggest, Joe D'Amato's **Notti porno nel mondo No. 2** ("Sexiest Nights in the World, Part Two," 1978), but rather Bruno Mattei's **Emmanuelle e le porno notti del mondo No. 2** ("Emmanuelle and the Sexiest Nights in the World, Part Two" also '78)—which may incorporate footage

from the D'Amato feature! Confused yet? Mattei directs under the pseudonym "Jimmy Matheus."

## SEXY VAMPIRE

Parade Video

This is a French Canadian release of José Luis Madrid's film **THE HORRIBLE SEXY VAMPIRE** [*El Vampiro de la Autopista*, "The Vampire of the Highway," 1970], packaged in a box crediting its direction to star Wolfgang Wohlfahrt. Though Madrid used the pseudonym "Jim Delavena" on Spanish prints (presumably to avoid the controversy of having shot its erotic scenes in Spain), the onscreen credits here list "Arthur Davidson" as director. The print itself is rather grainy and quite dark in certain scenes.

## France

### LES FANTÔMES DE SODOME

(*The Ghosts of Sodom*)  
Kara Film, rental only

Shot just before **Soupçons de Mort** and for the same producer, Alfredo Alfieri, this Lucio Fulci film was announced as **GHOSTLIGHT** and involves a group of teenagers confronting Nazi ghosts in an old house. Intended as the first release of a ten-film agenda, the Fulci/Alfieri partnership was cut short by a professional quarrel. Running time is 89m 36s.

### FUREUR MEURTRIÈRE

(*Deadly Fury*)  
Ciné Video, 80F

A retitling of **La Longue nuit de l'exorcisme** ("The Long Night of Exorcism"), the original French release title of Lucio Fulci's



**DON'T TORTURE THE DUCKLING** [*Non si sevizia un paperino*, 1972]. An interesting *giallo* about the investigation of serial child murders in rural Italy, the film stars Florinda Bolkan, Irene Papas, and Thomas Milian. It was never released in America.

### SOUPÇONS DE MORT

(“*A Touch of Death*”)  
Kara Film, rental only

Made in 1988, this story of a modern-day Bluebeard pursued by his conscience is Lucio Fulci's most recent work. It was filmed under the alluring title **Quando Alice ruppe lo specchio** (“When Alice Broke the Looking Glass”) and remains undistributed in Italy, despite a heavy number of gory special effects by Pino Ferrante. Piero Regnoli—the screenwriter of Freda's **THE DEVIL'S COMMANDMENT** [*I Vampiri*, 1957] and director of **THE PLAYGIRLS AND THE VAMPIRE** [*L'ultima preda del vampiro*, 1960]—co-scripted the film, but the script is credited solely to producer Alberto Alfieri. Running time: 88m.

### TERREUR SUR LA PLAGE

(“*Terror on the Beach*”)  
CK Video, 40F

This curiosity, found on the direct sale shelves of a Paris supermarket, is a retitling of **La Lunga spiaggia fredda** (“The Long, Cold Beach,” 1969), directed by Ernesto Gastaldi—who co-directed **LIBIDO** in 1966 and used the pseudonym “Julian Berry” while scripting such classic Italian horrors as **THE HORRIBLE DR. HITCHCOCK** and **THE WHIP AND THE BODY** in the early '60s. Italian reference books list this film as “unfinished,” but investigation shows that it had a few theatrical playdates in Italy in 1971. The plot anticipates Craven's **LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT** to a surprising degree: a group of freaky young motorcyclists rape a girl while holding her boyfriend prisoner in an abandoned shack on the beach—but his “vengeance” is carried out in a totally different manner. Approximately 90m.

### Italy

### APOCALIPSIS SEXUAL

(“*Sexual Apocalypse*”)  
Ciné Video Sound

This—one of the very few non-Franco films in which Lina Romay appears—was directed by her former schoolmate, Carlos (**HOUSE OF PSYCHOTIC WOMEN**) Aured. Lina stars with fellow Franco alumnus Ajita Wilson as the two female members of a sex-crazed kidnapping ring who pose as an ambulance team to kidnap women for cash and kicks (not necessarily in that order). This title is also available on Venezuelan videotape.

### I DUE VOLTI DELLA PAURA

(“*The Two Faces of Fear*”)  
Videogram

A Tullio Demichelli *giallo* (circa 1972) starring George Hilton, Fernando Rey, and Luciana Paluzzi, whose title brazenly sub-

tracts a digit from the original title of Mario Bava's **BLACK SABBATH** [*I tre volti della paura*, "The Three Faces of Fear," 1963]. Hilton made amends for "losing face" in another *giallo*, **Sette donne per l'assassino** ("Seven Women for the Murderer"), which added a digit to the original title of Bava's **BLOOD AND BLACK LACE** [*Six donne per l'assassino*, "Six Women for the Murderer," 1964]! What a numbers racket! Priced for sell-through.

### UN GATTO NEL CERVELLO

(*"A Cat in the Brain"*)  
Empire Video

Lucio Fulci wrote and directed this unbelievably gory (and funny) movie, in which he stars as horror film director "Lucio Fulci," who

succumbs to violent hallucinations as a result of directing his latest movie. Fulci's psychiatrist, moonlighting as a serial killer, hypnotizes his star patient into believing himself guilty of his mentor's crimes. At the end of the film, Fulci survives to sail into the sunset on his yacht "Perversion" (!) with a pretty nursemaid and a chainsaw for companionship! Includes excerpts from his unreleased 1988-89 productions **SODOMA'S GHOSTS** and **SWEET HOUSE OF HORRORS**, as well as clips from unreleased projects by Leandro Lucchetti, Andrea Bianchi, and others. Obviously a must-see, not least of all for its comeback performances by '70s sex queens Malisa Longo and Ria de Simone, and a most bizarre appearance by Brett Halsey (his beard comes and goes from

scene to scene, as his footage was culled from two different films!). According to Fulci, the film is "incomplete" on video, as it was in theaters, because his distributor wanted to keep the film under 90m! The tape runs 86m, and is noticeably short on the details of Halsey's death or capture.

### ORGASMO NERO

(*"Black Orgasm"*)  
Videomovie

Also known as **VOODOO BABY**, this Joe D'Amato film is a softcore item with horrific undertones, starring Susan Scott [Nieves Navarro], Richard Harrison, and Lucia Ramirez. To our surprise, this version included hardcore sequences involving Ramirez and a Harrison look-alike!



*Lucio Fulci's psychiatrist gives his patient something to make films about in the outrageous UN GATTO NEL CERVELLO (1990).*



# The Trouble with TITIAN

Part 2

*Francis Ford Coppola's Lost Thriller  
and How Roger Corman Turned it Into 5 Movies!*

By Tim Lucas

## Film #2: BLOOD BATH

(1964, unreleased)

*"I don't know why anybody would care about a little thing like that, but go ahead."*

—Jack Hill



**N ED NAHA'S** THE FILMS OF ROGER CORMAN: BRILLIANCE ON A BUDGET Gary Kurtz (a former sound recordist, who most recently produced the **STAR WARS** trilogy and Jim Henson's **THE DARK CRYSTAL**)

offers a unique perspective on the atmosphere at Filmgroup during the "watershed period" of 1962-66:

"There was a group of us—Coppola, Hellman, myself and, later, Bogdonovich—a whole underground of people who worked on non-union, low-budget features. We'd get called up and asked if we could work on a project for a few days. You'd say sure, and show up for work not even knowing the name of the movie. Most of the time, no one on the set even knew the name of the movie, just the number. I was never sure what picture I was working on. I remember working on one film two or three times because everyone was trying to film more stuff to fix it."

Kurtz could only be describing Rados Novakovic's **Operacija Ticijan**, the "unreleasable" Yugoslavian thriller co-created by Francis Ford Coppola (discussed in VW #4).

The task of resurrecting this stillborn project was given to Jack Hill, a young filmmaker who had followed Francis Coppola into The Filmgroup after graduating from the UCLA film school. Hill and Coppola had been friends at UCLA, had even acted in each other's student films; in fact, many years later, Coppola "borrowed" the storyline of Hill's 30-minute student film **THE HOST** for the Third Act of **APOCALYPSE NOW** (1979). At the time, Hill (whose first credit was 'production assistant' in **BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN**, 1963) was in Corman's good favor for having saved Coppola's **MENTIA 13** with a couple of grisly inserts. (The original cut reportedly caused the smiling producer to break several pencils.) Also, as William Campbell explained, "Roger could always smell



*Jack Hill (opposite) and Francis Coppola, age 22, on the set of an early "nudie" collaboration, THE WIDE OPEN SPACES (1961).*

poverty." Corman needed a director who wouldn't laugh in his face when he told them to deliver a releasable picture in five days, using a minimum of 30 minutes of an unreleasable Yugoslavian film on a budget of no more than \$900! Jack Hill, nearing the hallmark age of 30 without a feature yet to his credit, was that man.

"The print which arrived from Yugoslavia was almost incomprehensible," Hill recalled. "At least, I couldn't follow the storyline. I excised those parts of the movie I felt I could do something with, wrote a script to support those pieces, then tried to match that footage as best I could."

Naturally, the whole notion of a reshoot would have been impossible had William Campbell not already agreed in principle to reprise the role of Sordi in Hill's new scenes. However, due to either oversight or presumption, Campbell had not been consulted before Hill's rewrite was given the go-ahead! This moot point placed the film's producer in an uncharacteristically vulnerable bargaining position.

"Roger called me up and told me there was no way he could release **OPERATION: TITIAN** in the shape it was in, that he didn't have enough material, and would I be willing to make a deal to shoot some added scenes," Campbell related. "Of course I pressed him, because we were back at home and he was, frankly, a little annoyed at this. I pressed him for a certain amount of money and he thought I was taking advantage. I really wasn't; the point was, we were back in the States by this time. It's a little different to be somewhere on vacation. I had a grand time in Yugoslavia but, once you come home, it's back to business, you know?"

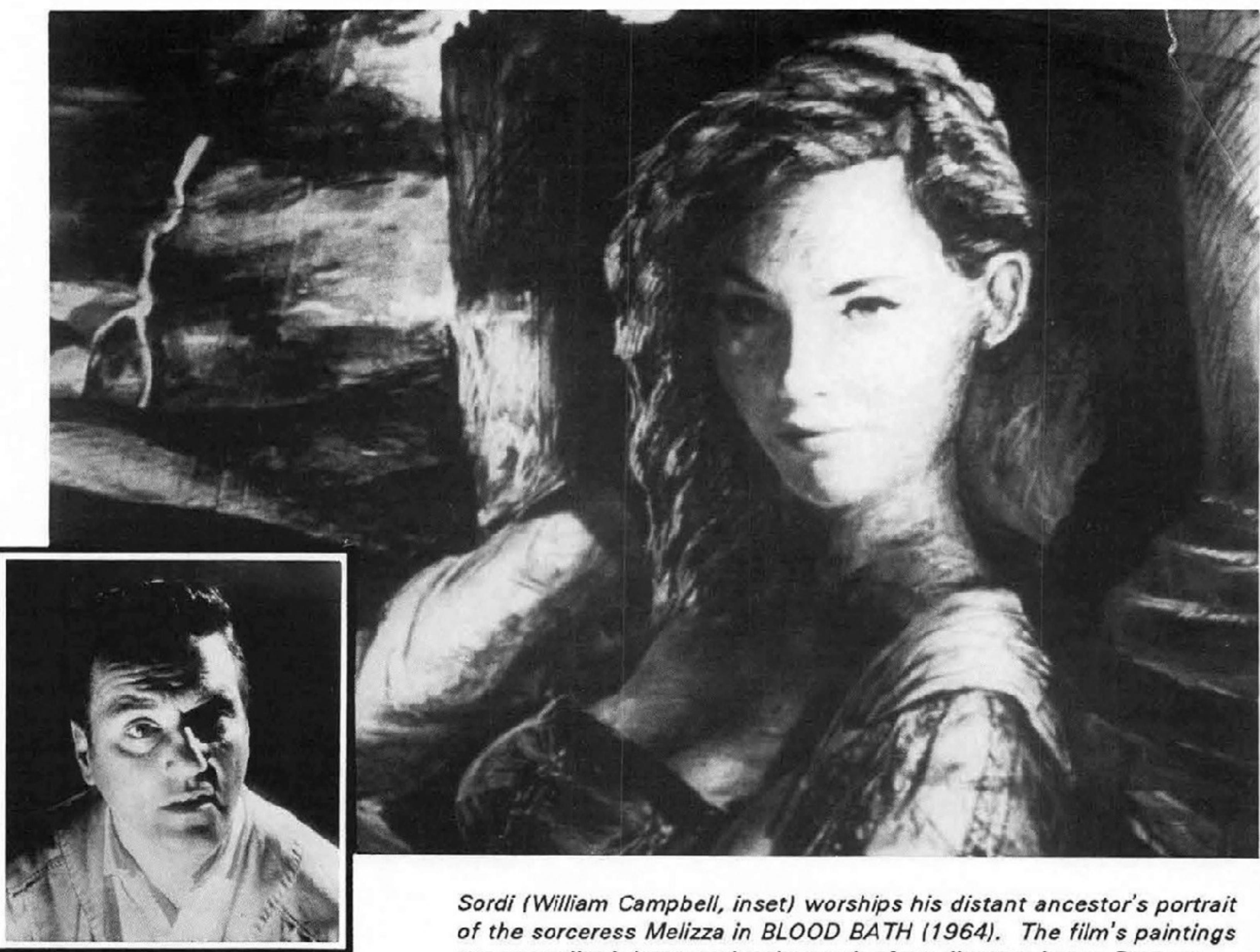
Corman eventually bowed to Campbell's demands, a salary which the actor describes as "a pretty heavy amount

*Footage from Jack Hill's BLOOD BATH can be seen in TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE (Sinister Cinema, P.O. Box 4369, Medford, OR 97501-0168 — \$19.00 ppd.).*

*Director/Screenplay: Jack Hill  
Producer: Roger Corman  
Photographer: Alfred Taylor  
[B&W, 1:65]  
Editor: J. Hill  
Assistant director: James Brunner  
Sound: Gary Kurtz  
Sound FX: Mort Tabor  
Script supervisor: Sharon Compton  
Running time unavailable.*

*Cast:  
William Campbell (Antonio/Erno Sordi)  
Marrisa Mathes (Daisy)  
Linda Saunders (Dorian/Melizza)  
Carl Schanzer (Max)  
Sid Haig (1st Beatnik)  
Jonathan Haze (2nd Beatnik)  
Mel Welles (uncredited,  
man on the beach).*





*Sordi (William Campbell, inset) worships his distant ancestor's portrait of the sorceress Melizza in BLOOD BATH (1964). The film's paintings are uncredited, but may be the work of art director James Brunner.*

of money for just a few days' work." When Campbell received the script pages for the new scenes, his jaw dropped at the discovery that Corman had still managed to cop the upper hand. "He had hired me for just under a week—five days, if I remember correctly—to film a script which I didn't know at the time was long enough to reshoot *half* the picture! I mean, *Jesus!* The second shock was reading the new pages. When Jack Hill called me, I told him 'This stuff has nothing to do with the original picture. You're interjecting *horror* stuff in here!' The amazing thing was, would you believe, by the time Jack finished talking to me, I *bought* it?!"

## BLOOD BATH Synopsis

Venice, California.

In a small beatnik club, an abstract artist named Max holds court. He demonstrates how quantum energy can be applied to painting by firing a paint pellet at the head of a naturalistic painting of his girlfriend, Daisy. Upset, offended, Daisy storms out.

On the boardwalk she notices some disturbing paintings displayed in a gallery window, then meets the artist, Antonio Sordi, who's come there to visit his "lost children." Sordi, a successful artist involved in a series called "Dead Red Nudes," is the obsessive descendant of 15th Century painter Erno Sordi, whose depictions of the unconscious mind were said to exude such power that the Church charged him with sorcery and burned him at the stake, fuelling the flames with his own forbidden canvases. The chief witness in the trial against Sordi was his mistress and model, Melizza, a madwoman who believed that his portrait of her had stolen her soul. The modern day Sordi believes himself possessed by his ancestor's only extant work, the portrait of Melizza, whose laughter can be stifled only by covering other canvases in others' blood. Daisy decides to pose nude for Sordi, to get even with Max but, aroused, the artist kills her and dips her corpse in molten wax.

Daisy's best friend, a modern dance student named Dorian, investigates her disappearance, not suspecting that her boyfriend Tony is in fact her friend's murderer. Dorian is equally mystified by

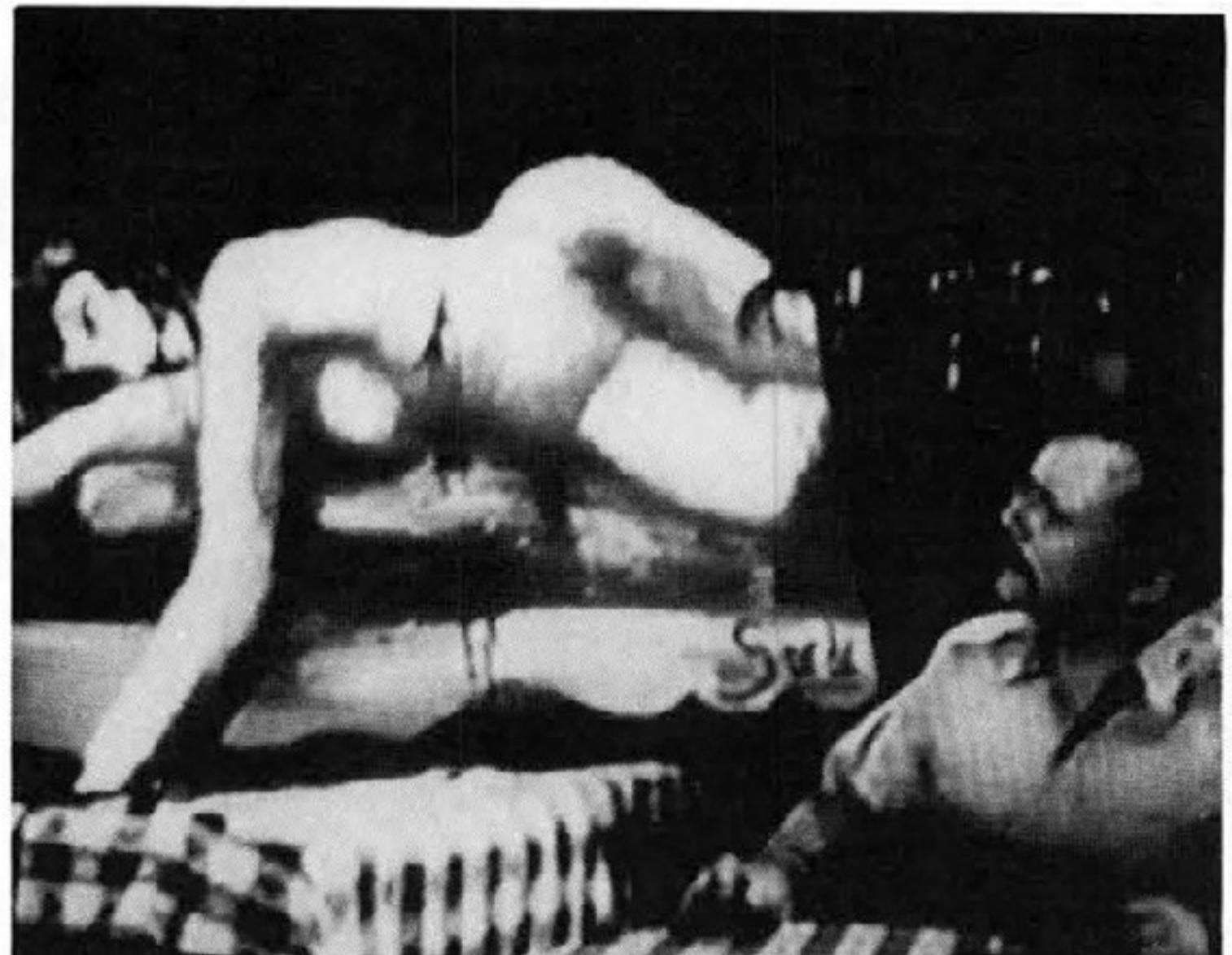
Tony's reluctance to make love with her, or even to allow her to visit his studio. Eventually she learns the location of his studio and, with Daisy's beatnik friends in pursuit, pays him a surprise visit. Tony, totally deranged, perceives Dorian as an incarnation of Melizza and prepares to slay her. Before he can cut her throat with a straight razor, Tony's deluded mind animates the wax-coated corpses in his studio and is pushed by them into his own vat of wax. The beatniks arrive to find Sordi has really thrown himself into his work and become the ultimate statement of quantum energy.

• • •

From examining the synopsis, it is easy to see that Hill was able to take not only footage, but conceptual excerpts from Novakovic's film. In a telling move which painfully contrasts European and American attitudes about art, Hill transplanted the tormented Sordi—in the original film, an artist spiritually oppressed by a deep empathy for tradition—into the fringe of West Coast beatnik culture, where nothing was sacred, painting a fashionable series called "Dead Red Nudes" as a commercially-viable coverup to a series of murdered models.

Hill directed the reshoots on location in Venice, California, with Sordi's studio interiors filmed at a small studio in Glendale. A surreal fantasy sequence involving Sordi's ancestor and the taunting Melizza was filmed in the California desert flats, with Bill Campbell and Linda Saunders doubling in the roles. "All the time we were shooting the desert scene, I never knew what the hell was going down," Campbell confessed. "I forgot what the hell we did out there. We ran, crawled on the ground, all kinds of things. There was just a lot of crawling around and having the broad crawling. I can remember standing out there in the middle of nowhere, asking Jack Hill, 'How in the hell does this come into **OPERATION: TITIAN?**' And he said, 'Gee, Bill, I don't know that that's still going to be the title,' and then he made this very lucid explanation. I accepted it, what the hell. People have written letters, asking me if I even knew we were making a horror picture. I didn't know *what* kind of picture it would turn into. I just hoped it was *psychological* or something!"

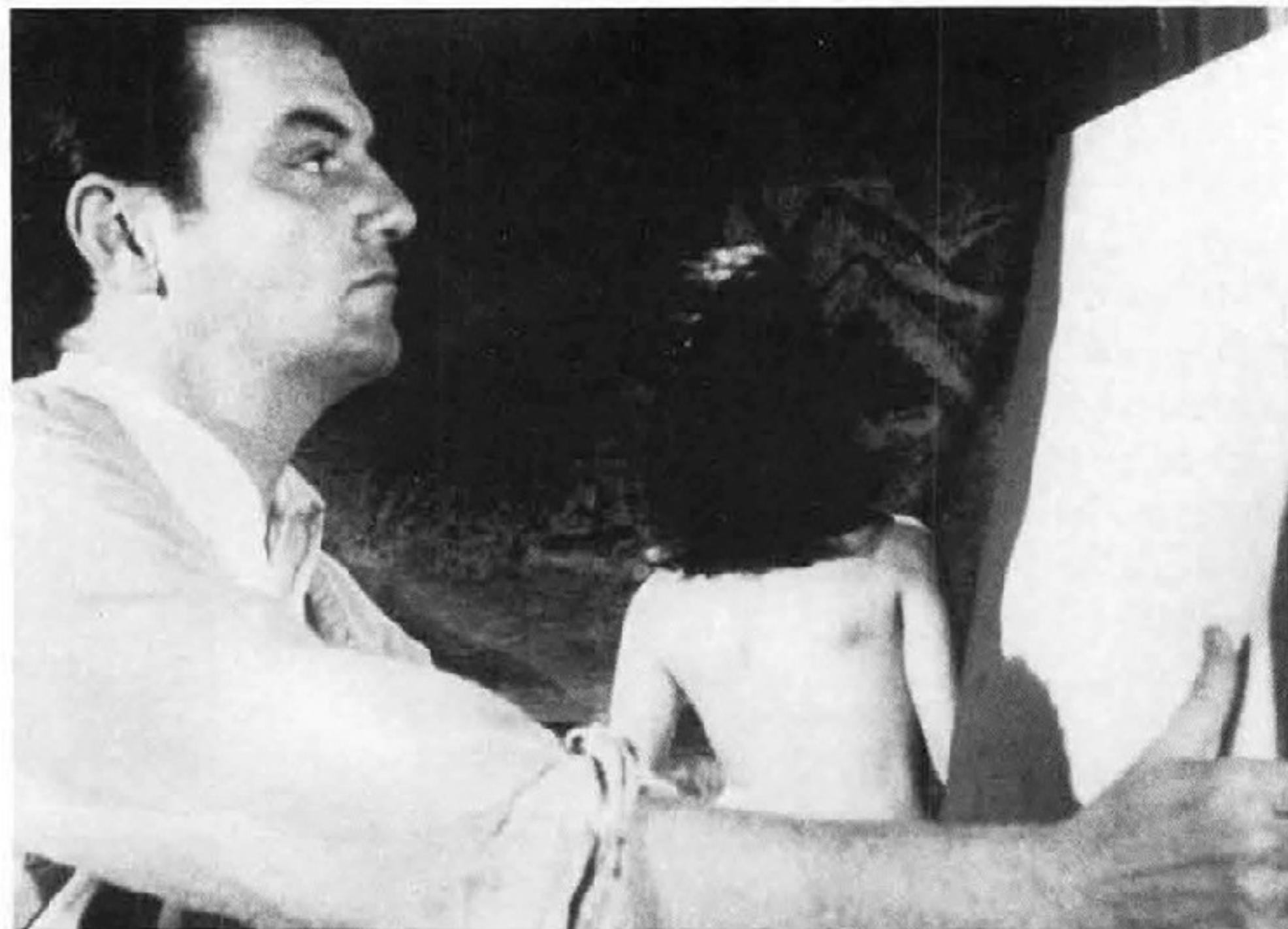
It seems Campbell wasn't the only member of the troupe who didn't know what he was doing. On the first morning the crew drove out to the desert to film the fantasy sequence, it was discovered while unloading the van that the assistant cameraman had forgotten to pack the camera! The crew drove back to Glendale and filmed the scenes scheduled for the following day.<sup>1</sup>



Sordi's "Dead Red Nudes"

Top: "Et tu, Daisy?" exclaims rival Carl Schanzer upon seeing Sordi's latest work.

Middle: Painting in gallery window.  
Bottom: Sordi's self-portrait.



*Sordi prepares to execute his latest portrait.*

Despite its lunatic production and hasty preparation, **BLOOD BATH** appears to have been more than the sum of its parts. Hill had glommed onto an earlier Corman film for inspiration, **THE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** (1959), still two decades away from popular recognition as a classic *comédie noir*. His darkly mischievous eye had caught the word "sordid" in Sordi's name, and proceeded to envision him at the heart of a gloomy little satire, additionally inspired by Hitchcock's **PSYCHO**. In a move conceived as an homage to **PSYCHO**, Hill decided to kill off his female lead at the earliest opportunity. In a lengthy sequence which survives (more or less) in the release version jointly signed by Hill and Stephanie Rothman, **BLOOD BATH** initially fixes its attentions on Daisy, a beatnik model disillusioned by the pretentious "movements" of her lowly crowd. After Daisy meets Sordi outside a gallery exhibiting his work, the artist complains that his Muse has deserted him, and Daisy offers her services as his subject. At Sordi's studio beneath the Dubrovnik tower, Daisy strips to pose for the latest "Dead Red Nude." Sordi darkens an empty canvas with black paint, causing the spectre of Melizza to arise from the pigment, taunting him into bludgeoning his model to death with a huge cleaver. The canvas is daubed with the slain girl's blood until it bears a likeness of her corpse, then her body is collected in a fishing net and lowered, by a pulley system, into a bubbling wax pit under Sordi's studio floor.

Although this scene appears in the released film in incomplete form, it still provides its most memorable sequence. As originally directed and edited by Jack Hill, however, it may have been a *tour de force*—a career-making display akin to Coppola's pre-credit sequence in **DEMENTIA 13**.

After listening to a shot-by-shot description of the scene as it finally appeared, Hill (who has never seen, or wanted to see, the abortive version of **BLOOD BATH** released in 1966) offered the following comment: "What I shot was much more graphic than that. What I had was a shot in which [Campbell] chopped her right in the chest, viewed from behind her back, which was really gruesome. We went through a lot of trouble to get that shot, and it looked terrific. It was really shocking, though most of it was suggested in the angle and timing. The scene could probably play on television today but, by yesterday's standards, it might've seemed a little rough. Roger was always pretty squeamish, believe it or not."

Anyone who has seen even the compromised version of this footage will be surprised to learn that it was filmed without storyboards, a habit which Hill claims to have happily left behind at UCLA. However effective the scene may be (or might have been), the intention to duplicate the impact of **PSYCHO**'s first murder was ultimately quixotic, since Janet Leigh was more of a household name than was Marrisa Mathes, **PLAYBOY**'s Miss June 1962.

Today, Hill chuckles nostalgically at the mention of Marrisa Mathes: "There were two guys named Dick Kay and Harry Ribnik who ran United Producers Releasing Organization, which had produced Francis [Coppola]'s **THE PLAYGIRLS & THE BELL-BOY** (1962)—one of their most popular releases was **GEISHA PLAYMATES**, that's the kind of producers they were—and I asked them if they could recommend someone because, at that time, it was almost impossible to get an actress to do a nude scene. There wasn't any frontal nudity in **BLOOD BATH**, because it couldn't be done at that time, but the scene did require an actress to be nude on the set.



*Daisy (Marissa Mathes) notices that Sordi is no longer holding a brush in his hand...*

Marrisa had apparently done a nude scene in some previous film for UPRO, so they recommended her.

"I remember that murder scene very well because [Marrisa] was such a pain in the ass," Hill continued. "Her husband had just become a very hot rock promoter, one of those overnight success guys, and he was acting as her manager. He thought she was going to become a big star from this movie, which was just laughable, I thought, and he was making problems. She had to do a lot of stuff nude and she was very nervous that people on the set would see her. She wanted crew people off the set—our crew was so minimal, we couldn't spare anybody—a lot of baloney like that. She asked that her nipples be taped up, which I agreed to, but even that made problems because, when she took the tape off, it left big red marks on her. Physically, it's not easy to do a scene like that; all the movements have to be timed exactly right. It takes a lot of time, work and repetition, and she was just a real pain in the butt about it. She wasn't up to it."

Another female character that Hill chose to eliminate was Vera (Irena Prosen), the original female lead of *Operacija Ticijan*—pseudonymously credited as "Anna Pavane" on the film's future US version, *PORTRAIT IN TERROR*. Hill conceived a new girlfriend for Sordi: a dead-ringer for the taunting, portrait-bound spectre of Melizza, humorously named Dorian. Dorian's naive artistic perspective (exemplified by her study of expressionistic dance) offers Sordi not only a temptingly innocent victim, but the very opposite qualities necessary to salvage his soul from its own darkness. In one characteristic scene, Sordi is shown struggling to suppress his murderous impulses, as Dorian fantasizes aloud about their future, picturing herself and Sordi in "a

big, bright room," she dancing, he painting "a big, yellow picture" (*Daisy?*), looking up from his canvas now and then to wink at her. Just as the tension between *Ticijan*'s Sordi and Vera teetered on the juxtaposition of her speedy engagement to another man with the adulteries of his ancestor's duplicitous bride, the tension between Sordi and Dorian arises from her eagerness to consummate their romance, after knowing Sordi only 15 days. The fact that Hill would attempt, on such a short schedule, to incorporate a continuity of tension to assist the fusion of old and new footage is a testimony to his considerable involvement with the project.

If Hill's directorial talent is obvious from these examples of his original footage, his unease with the adaptation and incorporation of scenes from *Operacija Ticijan* is equally apparent from the examples which survive in the project's final draft, **TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE**. Apart from making free use of the film's scenic, second-unit footage, which helps to give the picture an off-kilter atmosphere, Hill bothered to extract only three highlights from the Novakovic film: Linda's visit to Sordi's studio, Sordi's confrontation with Cirrone, and Linda's opening credits striptease.<sup>2</sup> The second scene was particularly valuable to Hill as it allowed him to construct a second murder in a relatively short amount of time, a real blessing considering how much time Mathes had wasted on the film's first slaying.

Linda's visit to Sordi was inserted into **BLOOD BATH** essentially unchanged. In the following extracts, however, Hill rewrote the dialogue to explain that Patrick Magee's now-nameless character was in fact Linda's jealous husband! To assert this alteration visually, Hill rewrote the dialogue for the scene in

(Continued P. 30)

## SAME SCENES, DIFFERENT WORDS

### PORTRAIT IN TERROR

*Linda rolls over in Cirrone's hotel bed the following morning.*

LINDA: What is the time? Let me sleep just a little while longer? It's a beautiful dressing gown that you're wearing.

CIRRONE: This one's from Chicago.

LINDA: [FACE DIVERTED] Chicago!

CIRRONE: I lived there five years ago. I had eight of them!

LINDA: *Eight!?* Oooh!

CIRRONE: And two cars! Two!

LINDA: Ohhh, Doctor, I had no idea you were so rich!

CIRRONE: Sleep... sleep...

### BLOOD BATH

I'm so sleepy. I don't know what's the matter with me. I have so many errands to do this morning...

You're life is too strenuous. You spend much too much time away. You should stay here.

What for?

I want you to.

Why not? I'll start right now, if you like.

Sleep... sleep...

*This scene leads directly to the confrontation between Cirrone and Sordi. While the point of the scene in *Ticijan* was to reveal the two men as partners in crime, Hill's rewritten dialogue for **BLOOD BATH** twists things so far in the opposite direction that the corrupt Cirrone is introduced not only as Sordi's enemy, but as a man morally outraged:*

CIRRONE: I told you not to drink while I was in Dubrovnik.

There he sits without a care in the world!

SORDI: You shouldn't have killed the old man.

What right have you to just barge in here?

CIRRONE: Who told the old man I was coming?

What right have you to do what you did?

SORDI: How should I know?

Why are you here?

CIRRONE: The old man was ready for me. Somebody switched the pictures. I laid a trap. Where's the painting?

The stripper. Linda Moreno. You know her? Sure you know her. I saw you two. Well? She's my wife!

*Cirrone (Patrick Magee) and Linda (Maja Golenc) in OPERACIJA TICIJAN, revoiced for BLOOD BATH.*



SORDI: Haven't you taken it?

CIRRONE: Where's the painting? Where is the Titian you promised me? [SLAPS SORDI] Now I'll give you five minutes to tell me where the original is!

SORDI: If you haven't got it, that means Hugo must've hidden it.

CIRRONE: [LIFTS PAINTING] This the dancer? I saw her leaving, but she didn't see me. What was she doing here?

SORDI: She was pumping me about the Titian. She wanted to know what it was worth. [CIRRONE FINDS A PHONE NUMBER ON A PIECE OF PAPER] That's your phone number.

CIRRONE: She should be put on a leash...

*Cirrone uses Sordi's phone to call his hotel room, telling Linda to meet him "outside the old Church at 2:00." He hangs up, throws canvas in anger.*

CIRRONE: She'll pay for that. Now, for the last time: Where's the original?

SORDI: I don't know! I tell you, I don't know!

CIRRONE: You were seen in Rome. Now, if you don't give it to me, I'll kill you—carefully and quietly.

*Nervously, Sordi moves to the door.*

CIRRONE: It's locked.

*Cirrone dons a pair of gloves and produces a revolver from his shoulder holster. He aims.*

*CUT to cork being popped from a bottle of wine Linda has ordered. ("I undress easier drunk than sober.")*

What do you want?

Don't act so damn innocent! Don't you try to kid around with me! [SLAPS SORDI] I followed her yesterday and saw her come up here to see you!

The girl you saw here wasn't her.

[LIFTS PAINTING] Then who was this? I know my own wife's picture. What was she doing here?

What is it you want? The girl you saw was only a model! It wasn't Linda.

Still won't admit it? I know what I've seen; that's what's important.

It wasn't her, I tell you! It wasn't her!

It's too late for that. I hope it was fun, since you're going to pay a high price for it.

It's locked.

*New footage shot by Jack Hill picks up at this point. Instead of moving toward the door, Sordi pauses at the side of the curtain which we know covers his cherished portrait of Melizza. He turns to Cirrone with an optimistic expression.*

SORDI: The sketch I did is here behind this curtain. This'll change your mind.

*A white-suited man—Hill's stand-in for Patrick Magee—steps into frame, his face in the shadows. Sordi pulls a rope to unveil the painting, but it actually signals a trap door below Cirrone to open. Frame-by-frame analysis reveals that Magee's stand-in is dark-haired and bearded ("He was somebody on the crew, I don't remember who," Hill says), as he falls through the floor! A shot of the man's wax-encrusted head and hands as he sinks into the bubbling vat.*





Irena Prosen (left, in *OPERACIJA TICIJAN*) and Linda Saunders (right, in *BLOOD BATH*) illustrate Jack Hill's debt to Rados Novakovic's original climax.

*Ticijan* wherein Cirrone (incidentally, a doctor) demonstrates his bedside manner with Linda on the morning after their assignation.

The extent of Hill's work on redubbing the *Ticijan* scenes is known only because these examples were later incorporated by Stephanie Rothman into **TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE** (the TV version of **BLOOD BATH**, which required padding before being sold).

Considering the obvious style of its surviving footage, one wonders why Roger Corman—a cunning and tasteful director, but a producer rarely hindered by anything resembling artistic standards—would opt to leave Hill's original cut of **BLOOD BATH** unreleased. The truth is that the shelving of the film was actually due to a combination of faults.

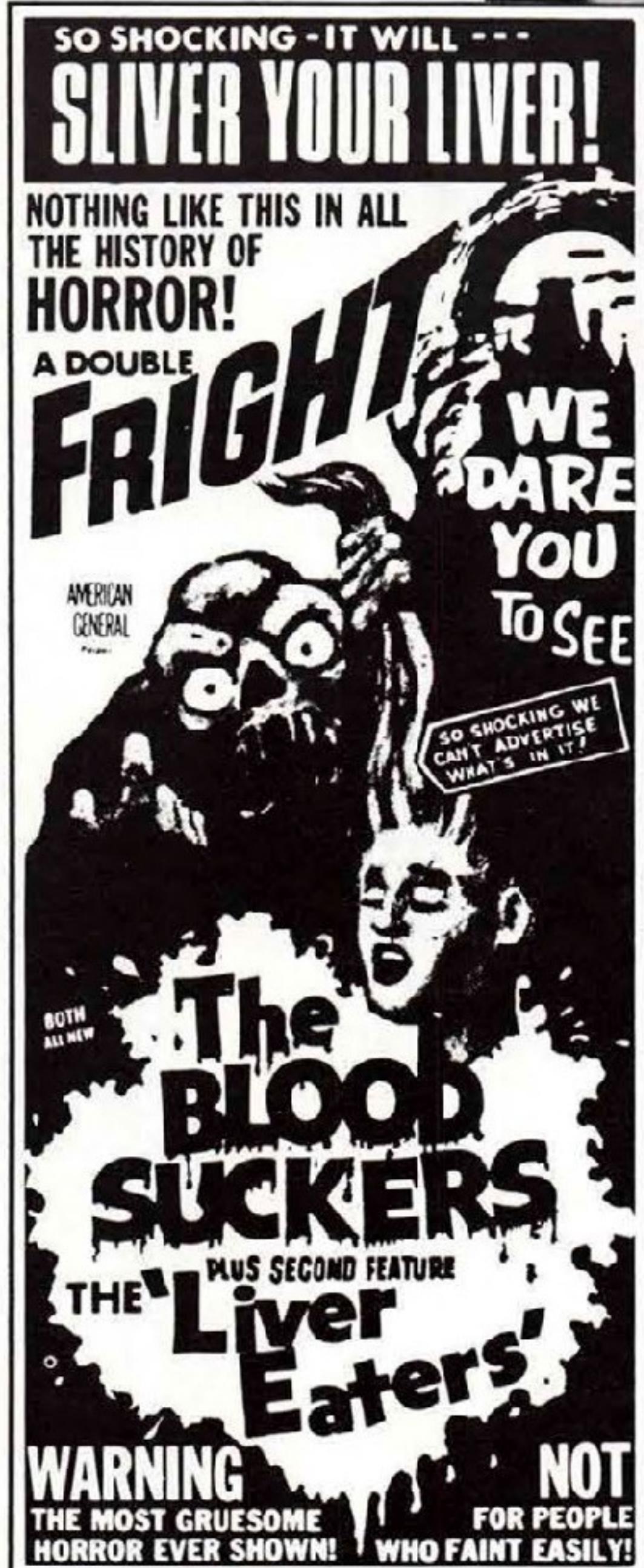
"In the middle of our reshoot, Roger went back to Yugoslavia to direct a picture called **THE SECRET INVASION**, leaving his brother Gene in charge," Hill explained. "By the time I had assembled my rough cut, Roger had locked himself up in his hotel room overseas and was refusing to answer the door. The way I heard it, he had signed Bobby Darin to be in his film and, on the eve of filming, Bobby ran off with some girl. Roger was refusing to go ahead with the picture until he found a replacement. He eventually got the casting straightened out, but I found myself unable to go any further with **BLOOD BATH** because Gene wasn't empowered to give me the go-ahead, and he wasn't really inclined to."

"The problem was that the look of the two films, when cut together, didn't quite match," Hill admitted. "There was a different film stock, a different style of shooting, lighting and everything. I thought ad-

justments could be accomplished satisfactorily in the lab, and also that audiences weren't likely to notice anyway, but Gene felt that my stuff just didn't match. So we were stuck. Gene couldn't make any decisions and, in the meantime, I was approached to do something else."

That "something else" was **CANNIBAL ORGY, OR THE MADDEST STORY EVER TOLD**, which Hill wrote, directed and edited in 1963 for American General Pictures. This black comedy starred Lon Chaney, Mantan Moreland, and several members of Hill's repertory company (**BLOOD BATH**'s Sid Haig and Carl Schanzer, and **DEMENTIA 13**'s Bart Patton and Mary Mitchell). The film's distributor—"a smooth character if I ever saw one," Hill confided—re-released the picture with a companion feature to the rural drive-in circuit the following year under the title **THE LIVER EATERS**. ("I think his catch line was, 'Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; if the Blood Suckers don't get you, the Liver Eaters must,' or something like that," the director reported.) The film's title was changed one last time to **SPIDER BABY**, emphasizing its stylistic debt to Tennessee Williams' morbidly erotic **BABY DOLL**.

Long feared to be a "lost" film, **SPIDER BABY** happily resurfaced on Toronto's Admit One Video label in 1982, at which time it was quickly embraced by the cognoscenti as a demented drollery on a par with Corman's own **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**. In fact, on a technical level, **SPIDER BABY** is the more accomplished picture and, as Stephen Bissette suggests, it is a distinct precursor of the family-based, "Third World American," backwoods horror



films [like Tobe Hooper's **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE** (1974) and Wes Craven's **THE HILLS HAVE EYES** (1977)] which dominated the next decade. Anyone familiar with the warped ways of this gem should have little trouble recognizing which scenes are Hill's in **TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE**.

Eerily erotic, blackly comic, intermittently shocking, and edited to razor sharpness, **SPIDER BABY** illustrates what **BLOOD BATH** might have been.

Jack Hill and Lon Chaney during the filming of *SPIDER BABY* (1963). Left: The film's re-release campaign.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of technical mishaps, Jack Hill remembers wanting Gary Kurtz to record the sound for the **BLOOD BATH** shoot because things had not worked out with his sound recordist on his reshoots for **MENTALIA 13**. Hill's erstwhile sound recordist was none other than Carroll Ballard, who later directed another acclaimed Francis Ford Coppola production, **THE BLACK STALLION** (1979). "I never forgave him because he never made any sound reports," Hill laughs. "I'd ask where the sound reports were, and he'd say, 'Aw, just take 'em off the camera reports!' I said to myself, 'This guy'll never get anywhere.' I couldn't recommend him very highly to anyone else, but he didn't need my recommendation, fortunately."

<sup>2</sup> This is an assumption based on the fact that only these three redubbed scenes appear in the final (Hill & Rothman) version of **BLOOD BATH**. Rothman did not supervise the redubbing of any additional *Operacija Tlicjan* footage for her cut of the film. It is possible that Hill's original cut incorporated additional, redubbed scenes from the Novakovic film, but Hill no longer remembers.

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# Black Sabbath



**B**efore the days of television, Mario Bava told frightening stories to his children at bedtime. Little Elena and her younger brother Lamberto were so frightened by these tales of wurdalaks,

*The UnMaking of*  
**Mario Bava's**  
**THE THREE FACES OF FEAR**

*By Tim Lucas*



*ghosts, and witches that they had to sleep in the middle of their parents' bed. When Bava decided to tell some of these stories in a film, his bedside manner proved to have a similar effect on his American distributors...*



Jacqueline Pierreux jokes with Mario Bava behind the scenes of "The Drop of Water." Opposite: Karloff, his trusty Pan-Am flight bag at his side, studies the "Wurdalak" script.

## B

Y THE EARLY '60s, America had evolved a unique perception of what horror films were and should be. Here, Technicolor nightmares were mass-produced to meet the insatiable demands of the children's matinee market while, in all other areas of the world, the same films were taken far more seriously, in many places forbidden to persons under the age of 18. When Italian companies started producing horror films of their own, after a decade of hosting American productions, it seemed only natural that they take their mature national audience into account while preparing them. Consequently, when American International Pictures acquired their first horror import—Mario Bava's *La Maschera del demonio* ("The Mask of the Demon," 1960)—for the domestic market, they felt compelled to tone it

down. Minus a few instances of roasting flesh and squirting blood, **BLACK SUNDAY** (its US release title) remained sufficiently undiluted for AIP to post an unprecedented warning against the attendance of children under 14.

Of the European filmmakers whose work was regularly censored for American audiences, Bava suffered the most extensive interference. His films were regularly subjected to changes that trespassed beyond mere censorship into literal reinterpretation. Perhaps the most extensively transformed of his horror films was *I tre volti della paura* ("The Three Faces of Fear," 1963), which AIP released—with a nod to past glory—as **BLACK SABBATH** in 1964. Scripted by Marcello Fondato (in collaboration with Alberto Bevilacqua, Bava, and Ugo Guerra), the film is an anthology composed of three stories—"The Telephone," "The Wurdalak" and "The Drop of



Water." Without fanfare, the film was radically overhauled for its AIP release; the order of its stories was reshuffled, the original soundtrack was rescored and, in the case of "The Telephone," the dialogue was extensively rewritten! The qualitative effect of the revisions imposed on **BLACK SABBATH** is perhaps best illustrated by critical opinion. Phil Hardy's **THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HORROR MOVIES**—so far the kindest of English sources for reviews of Bava's work—finds **BLACK SABBATH** "a stylistic exercise rather than a serious horror movie," while Lorenzo Codelli, in his annual report on Italian film production in the 1988 **INTERNATIONAL FILM GUIDE**, was moved to include **I tre volti della paura** at the very top of his list of "The Ten Best Italian Films 1963-1987."

For the purposes of this chapter, **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** and **BLACK SABBATH** will be considered as separate films, although an English-language version of **THREE FACES** has never been made commercially available. (**SABBATH** is not just the American version of the film; it is also the edition of record in Great Britain and Canada.) What this chapter intends, is to reproduce that original version for the vast audience deprived of it, as a means of distinguishing Bava's own intentions from those of his American revisionists.

## Pre-Production

Mario Bava was a creature of gloom and self-doubt, not inclined to speak well of his own films, but he once claimed **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** as his personal favorite.<sup>1</sup> A life-long devotee of Russian literature, Bava was able in two of its stories—"The Wurdalak" and "The Drop of Water"—to pay *homage* to some of his favorite authors while visually exploring his own highly individual, highly interior responses to their material, but was nonetheless careless about how the stories were attributed. "The Wurdalak," though based on a famous story by Alexei Tolstoi, was attributed to "Ivan Tolstoy" (who doesn't exist) while "The Drop of Water"—formally attributed to Anton Chekov—was, according to Bava's own later confession, "my own concoction, written with a lot of Dostoevski and a pinch of De Maupassant."<sup>2</sup>

American International had made a great deal of money with **BLACK SUNDAY** and had first pick of Bava's subsequent efforts. Though they passed on **HERCULES IN THE HAUNTED WORLD** [*Ercole al centro della terra*, "Hercules at the Center of the Earth," 1961], they financed the filming of additional comic scenes to soften the edge of his premier *giallo*, **THE GIRL WHO KNEW TOO MUCH** [*La*

*ragazza che sapeva troppo*, 1962], which they ultimately released as **EVIL EYE** in 1964. AIP also took advantage of the dubbing process to eliminate an important plot point from the film's original resolution, which explained that the film's central murder had been hallucinated by the heroine (Leticia Roman) after mistakenly smoking a cigarette offered her by a drug dealer! Reference sources often cite **THE WHIP AND THE BODY** [*La frustra e il corpo*, 1963] as the earlier of the two films, but American character actress Harriet White Medin (who appears in both) remembers working with Bava for the first time as the guilt-ridden concierge in "The Drop of Water."<sup>3</sup> AIP decided to pass on their option to distribute **THE WHIP AND THE BODY**—a frankly sado-masochistic ghost story—which then fell into the hands of Thunderbird Films, who took care only to keep the name "Christopher Lee" large on the posters and edited the film into senselessness; it was (appropriately) released as **WHAT!** in 1965. Finally, AIP's Italian *liaison*, Fulvio Lucisano, suggested to Samuel Z. Arkoff and James Nicholson that they would save money if they made the changes they would require known *before* they were filmed; in short, why not co-produce?

And so it was that AIP, in its ninth year of business, truly earned its rank as American International, joining financial forces with Italy's Emmepi Cinematografica and Galatea Films and France's Société cinématographique Lyre, to produce **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR**. Arkoff and Nicholson made their value as partners immediately felt by securing the acting services of Boris Karloff and Mark Damon (respectively, the former stars of AIP's **THE RAVEN** and **THE HOUSE OF USHER**). Evidently the co-production agreement into which AIP had entered granted them contributory and veto privileges, but *for the English-language version only*.

## The Introductions

At the time the film was produced, Boris Karloff was enjoying renewed popularity as the host of NBC-TV's horror anthology **THRILLER** (1960-62). American International's earlier anthology, **TALES OF TERROR** (also '63), featured no onscreen host to connect the stories, and they weren't about to miss an opportunity to exploit the **THRILLER** connection this time. Karloff appears as a warmly menacing Master of Ceremonies in both **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** and **BLACK SABBATH**, but the host footage is different in each. In **THREE FACES**, Karloff appears twice as host, at the beginning and at the end, with story segues accomplished by transparen-



*Unseen in the US: Karloff introduces THREE FACES OF FEAR atop an otherworldly promontory.*

cies bearing title and primary cast credits); in **BLACK SABBATH**, Karloff introduces the film in general at the top, then each episode individually, and the expected conclusive footage never materializes.

The motivating factor in AIP's use of individual introductions was their decision to rearrange the stories. Arkoff and Nicholson realized that young audiences would demand a monster in the first story, and reassigned "The Telephone" (a sleek thriller with neither monsters or Karloff) to middle position, in favor of "The Drop of Water," which featured the walking dead. This strategy also withheld Karloff's "Wurdalak" episode, the film's trump card, till last to send everyone out on a horrific high note. This rearrangement unfortunately negated the transitions which Bava had deliberately woven into his film's tapestry. Bava had arranged the stories so that they would dovetail visually: "The Telephone" ends with a man stabbed to death; "The Wurdalak" begins with the discovery of a man stabbed to death, and ends with faces gazing through a window; "The Drop of Water" begins with a woman gazing through a window. The symmetry was wasted once the stories were rearranged, but the introductions helped to conceal the damage.

Bava filled AIP's order for individual story introductions with his usual photographic ingenuity; thus **BLACK SABBATH** contains three fragments of Karloff footage not found in European prints. To introduce "The Drop of Water," Bava filmed Karloff's reflection in a bucket of water, its surface rippled by droplets from an offscreen syringe. "The Telephone" is introduced with a tiny Karloff and an enormous telephone, a trick of perspective. Prior to "The Wurdalak," Karloff appears in the story's forest in a well-tailored suit and, after introducing the tale, snaps his



*Unseen outside US: Karloff introduces BLACK SABBATH's "Wurdalak" episode.*

fingers and disappears in a puff of smoke. This footage does little more than ameliorate the film's tone, keeping it light.

**THREE FACES** features only one instance of host footage, which appears immediately after the opening titles. Here Karloff stands "atop" a seemingly gigantic, magenta promontory while, behind him, an illusion of wind is provided by light projected onto a cycloramic backdrop through a spinning zoetrope. As Karloff introduces the film, Bava paints his face with different colors of light, building to red as he tells us about wurdalaks, the creatures who "drink the blood of those they love the best."

Bava must have chosen this otherworldly *milieu* for the way it suggested the staging of opera, but AIP rejected it, believing it more suggestive of science fiction than horror. By the time they saw the footage, Karloff had left Rome; it was too late for Bava to do anything about it. Arkoff and Nicholson soon took advantage of Karloff's casting in another of their features to film an alternative opening narration, using much the same dialogue. For this new intro, Karloff was seated before a black backdrop, his neck and shoulders swathed with a black scarf, creating the illusion of a floating severed head. Shot with direct sound (unlike the rest of **SABBATH**), Karloff emanates avuncular menace as colors strobe over his face—so mechanically that the light seems to be projected from a Christmas color wheel. It isn't definitely known who directed this insert footage, but it was most likely Jacques Tourneur, who directed Karloff's next film **THE COMEDY OF TERRORS** (1964) in Los Angeles and must have been very happy to repay Bava for having completed **THE GIANT OF MARATHON**, which he'd abandoned in 1959.



*Michele Mercier as "Rosy" in an evocative publicity pose for "The Telephone."*

## The Telephone

Rosy (Michele Mercier) is an attractive, high-class call girl whose evening is terrorized by phone calls from an anonymous source capable of spying on her every move. When a newspaper clipping detailing the jailbreak of her former pimp, Frank (Gustavo de Nardo) is slipped under her door, she phones Mary (Lydia Alfonsi), an estranged lesbian lover, and asks that she spend the night to lend her support and protection. Unknown to Rosy, Mary has been placing the calls in a disguised voice in order to gain just such an invitation. As Mary writes an apologetic note to her sleeping lover, Frank breaks into Rosy's apartment and strangles the imposter before Rosy stabs him to death.

"The Telephone" has been attributed to F.G. Snyder and Howard Snyder by different sources. Nothing was published in English horror anthologies by either author, so it is tempting to assume, judging from the lurid deliberations of this story, that Snyder was in fact a pseudonymous Italian contributor to

The following sidebars compare the French and English dialogue scenes from "The Telephone," and reveal for the first time the extent to which the story was distorted for domestic audiences. Close viewing indicates that Mercier spoke all of her individual scenes in English, and those with Alfonsi in French, which lends the French video herein transcribed, a particular stamp of authenticity. It's obvious that AIP imposed a wholly manufactured (and preposterous) supernatural angle on the story, thoroughly undermining its impact and the adult shadings of the scenario; the dialogue reproduced here is nothing less than a revelation. (Oddly, the synopsis of "The Telephone" which appears in AIP's pressbook for **BLACK SABBATH** describes Frank only as a man whom Rosy has betrayed, not as a ghost.)

# THE TELEPHONE

Translated from the French by Alan Upchurch

## FIRST PHONE CONVERSATION

### THREE FACES OF FEAR

ROSY: Hello? Hello?

VOICE: How pretty you are, Rosy.  
A little too pretty, perhaps...

ROSY: Who's calling? Who are  
you?

VOICE: You'll find out who I am, a  
few seconds before dying. I  
can see the shape of your  
body. The tension of your  
arms. The line of your  
perfect legs. Don't cover  
them! A build like yours.  
Enough to drive someone  
crazy! I'm going to kill you.

ROSY: But who are you? Who?  
Hello?

*After the first phone call, CAMERA PANS DOWN  
to the red telephone.*

*CUT to a LONG SHOT of Rosy  
by her bed, smoking a  
cigarette.*

### BLACK SABBATH

Hello? Hello?

Hello, Rosy. How are you?

Who is this speaking?

Don't you know? Think,  
Rosy. How nice you look  
with that towel around  
you. You always did have  
a beautiful body.  
Beautiful! A body to drive  
someone crazy. No! Don't  
cover yourself. I like  
seeing you this way. Are  
you listening, Rosy?

But who are you? Who?  
Hello? Hello?

*The following 3 shots do  
not appear in the European  
version:*

- *LONG SHOT of Rosy  
putting on her white robe.  
She walks around the  
apartment. Lights cigarette  
from box on table. Goes to  
sofa, looks at window.  
Turns on lamp. Paces.*
- *CUT to ZOOM-IN to  
CLOSE SHOT of telephone.*
- *CUT to Rosy walking  
back over to the bed.*



## SECOND PHONE CONVERSATION

### THE THREE FACES OF FEAR

### BLACK SABBATH

ROSY: Hello?

Hello?

VOICE: Why did you put on your dressing gown? I told you to stay as you were. I really like you better when you're almost nude. That's how I want to see you when I return. Soon I'll be knocking on your door.

Why did you put on that dressing gown, Rosy? I told you to stay just as you were. I like you better when you have nothing on.

ROSY: But who are you? What do you want of me?

Who are you? What do you want of me?

VOICE: I told you. I want to kill you. I want to make you suffer. That's how I'm going to make you die. Understand, Rosy?

Everything. Everything that you have. But for now I just want you to take off that dressing gown. I want to watch you. Embrace you with my eyes. See you.



Italy's numerous yellow-jacketed *giallo* magazines. Inexplicably, the Italian version credits the story to Guy de Maupassant! It is interesting to note that both actresses in the sketch had worked with Bava before—Michele Mercier as Princess Zaina in **THE WONDERS OF ALADDIN** [*La Meraviglie di Aladino*, 1961, which Bava co-directed with Henry

Levin] and Lydia Alfonsi as the crimson-cloaked Sibyl in **HERCULES** [*La fatica di Ercole*, "The Labors of Hercules," 1957, which Bava photographed]. English-speaking viewers commonly regard "The Telephone" as a minor entry in the Bava catalogue, but the episode exercised a major influence over the direction of the popular Italian cinema

## THIRD & FOURTH PHONE CONVERSATIONS

### THE THREE FACES OF FEAR

VOICE: Rosy... Rosy... Rosy! You know I'm right beside you. I saw you. You hid your money and jewelry. You're so stupid. I'm not after your money! You really don't understand anything. It's not your money I want, it's *you*. I want your magnificent body. And I'll get it. No, not to caress it, but to feel your throat in my hands and strangle you. I'm going to kill you, Rosy...

ROSY: But who are you? Who are you, answer! I beg you, answer! Hello, answer! But what have I done to you? What have I done to you? Ah, if this is some stupid joke...!

*A letter tumbles through the mailslot. Rosy climbs stairs. Picks up letter.*

*Rosy opens the envelope. Inside, she finds a newspaper clipping with a photograph of a man under the headline "FRANK RAINER HAS ESCAPED!"*

Rosy... Rosy... Rosy! Why did you hide your money and jewelry? How stupid of you! You always did think money was the answer. It can't help you. Nothing can help you. Because I want you. I want that beautiful body of yours. And I'll get it. I want us to be joined together... and we will be. Soon.

But who are you? Who are you, tell me! I can't stand anymore, I can't stand it! What have I done to you? What have I done? You're driving me mad! Please, tell me!

*Rosy climbs stairs. Sees letter on floor. She picks it up, then opens door to check the hall. Entire following sequence of neighbor walking dog and talking to Rosy is not in European prints.*

*Rosy opens the envelope. A blank sheet of paper is enclosed, upon which a note writes itself (in animation) before her very eyes, as if in reappearing ink: "There's no way of avoiding it, Rosy—it won't be long now! Frank."*<sup>4</sup>

*The telephone rings.*

ROSY: Hello?

VOICE: Hello, Rosy. You're beginning to understand. Tell me the truth. You didn't expect this. I swore I'd find you. And now I'm near you at last. Very near, Rosy. And there's nothing you can do to me. Even if you call the police, I'll be there before they arrive. Remember, I'm very near.

ROSY: Frank, listen! Listen to me, Frank!

Hello?

You're beginning to understand now, aren't you, Rosy? You didn't expect me, did you? I had to come and find you. I'm near you at last. Very near. There's nothing you can do, Rosy. Nothing in this world. You can't call the police. They won't be able to help you. Because I'm much closer to you than the police. Remember that! Much closer!

Frank is dead! This can't be Frank!

in general, and Bava's career in particular. Though Bava's **THE GIRL WHO KNEW TOO MUCH** was far more serious in tone than its US version (**EVIL EYE**) and can be seen as the first Italian film of a burgeoning genre, "The Telephone" was the first color *giallo*, a word which has since become the generic Italian term for thrillers which soft-peddle police procedure

in favor of colorful, stylized celebrations of violence. **EVIL EYE**, a straightforward stylish mystery, is the starting point, but the overbearing innocence of its heroine prevents it from achieving the full flower of its promise. In "The Telephone," however, that promise is fulfilled in a bouquet of voyeurism, lesbianism, fetishism, and a relentlessly sordid atmosphere;

## ROSIE CALLS MARY

### THE THREE FACES OF FEAR

MARY: Hello?

ROSY: Mary! It's me, Rosy!

MARY: Oh! Good evening. I wasn't expecting you to call. You told me you never wanted to speak to me again.

ROSY: Oh, I beg you! Forget that! Frank has escaped!

MARY: Yes, I saw it in the papers. But that's none of my concern. You're quite free to go back to him.

ROSY: But you don't understand. I'm afraid. Because he wants revenge. I'm certain of it. Come and keep me company, I beg you!

MARY: You want... [SIGNIFICANT PAUSE] me to come over? Did I hear you right?

ROSY: Yes, yes! I beg you, Mary! Come quickly, please! And spend the night!

MARY: I understand, my dear. I'll be over in just a few minutes. But calm down, I beg you.

ROSY: Thanks, I'll be waiting for you.

### BLACK SABBATH

Hello?

Mary! This is Rosy!

Oh? What happened? Whatever made you call me, of all people?

Mary, it's important. *Frank* just called me!

What are you talking about? You worry me. You know as well as I do he's dead.

No! He's alive!

[MARY: Take it easy.]

Oh, Mary! Mary! I'm afraid. He wants to get even. I know he does. Come over here. Right away! Please. You can't imagine the things he said when he spoke to me.

What? He spoke to you? Did I hear you right?

Yes, yes! I beg you! Come right away. He's been threatening me!

All right, I'm coming. I don't have any hard feelings. I will be over right away.

Thanks. Hurry!

*The telephone rings again.*

VOICE: Rosy? Why did you call your friend Mary? Did you imagine she could help you? You thought I wouldn't know?

*CUT to a shot—not in AIP prints—beginning with a CLOSE SHOT of the telephone jack, then PANNING along the phone cord to a MEDIUM SHOT of Mary on the phone, speaking to Rosy through a voice-distorting handkerchief!<sup>5</sup> She continues:*

And so you called over there. But it was useless. Because I'm near you. I told you that. Very near. Call whomever you like, Rosy, it won't do any good. Even if you have a hundred people around you! Before the next sunrise, you will die. You understand, Rosy? Before the sun rises again, you'll be dead.

Why did you call our old friend Mary? How she loved me! But I gave her up for you. So you could turn me in! Now call whoever you want. It won't help because... you'll be dead before dawn!





*Rosy (Michele Mercier) turns to Mary (Lydia Alfonsi) for protection.*

### MARY'S ARRIVAL

*Mary's arrival at Rosy's apartment does not appear in AIP's version. It follows:*

*There is a knock at Rosy's door.*

MARY: Rosy, it's me! Open up!

ROSY: Ah, it's you? Is it really you, Mary?

MARY: Good evening. Something bothering you?

ROSY: Yes. If you only knew how afraid I've been!

MARY: Good evening.

*Mary walks languidly into the apartment, caressing Rosy's chin as she passes by her.*

Oh! So much light! My word, Rosy! [UNINTELLIGIBLE] Oh, forgive me! I forgot that your lovers tend to be such important people. You're the mistress of a chairman of the board. I see things haven't changed much. Everything's just as it was when we were friends.

*Mary strolls over to the bed and seats herself on the edge while Rosy brings a couple of cocktails. The AIP version resumes here.*

though the story itself may be less eventful than the preceding feature, the photography is unceasingly suggestive and solicitous. As such, it marks the true genesis of the modern *gialli* popularized today by such Bavian disciples as Dario Argento and Lucio Fulci.

Present on the set of **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** was Salvatore Billitteri, whose New York-based Titra Sound Corporation was an indispensable member of the AIP team. "We used to bring Sal every Italian picture we wanted to release theatrically," Sam Arkoff said. "Sal would cut 'em down to our specifications and redub them, because the Italian's English dub was done without much care, to make easy sales to Hong Kong and Africa and other action-seeking countries. Later, when we started co-producing in Italy, Sal would often come over while a picture was going on and he would do the looping from specifications." In the case of "The Telephone" Billitteri, whom **BLACK SABBATH** gives the uncharacteristic credit of "production assistant," worked in concert with the production team to make a less sexual, more supernatural version of the tale for AIP.

## MARY'S VISIT

### THE THREE FACES OF FEAR

MARY: Let us drink to renewed friendship. Come on over here and tell everything to your old friend.

ROSY: Please! It's not a joke, you must believe me!

MARY: Fine. Very well. Just as you wish. We'll be serious.

ROSY: He's alive, I tell you! I heard him speak. With a cold and menacing voice. He said terrible things to me. He knows everything I do in the house, he... he knew my every movement. The first time he called, I wasn't wearing a stitch of clothes. And he knew it. Then I put on my dressing gown and he knew that, too. He even knew immediately that I had called you. As though he were in this very room. Finally, he even threatened to kill me.

MARY: Crank calls. [ROSY gasps.] Coincidence. Nothing but coincidence.

ROSY: That's what I thought, too. But how did he know I called you? He called me right afterwards. He always knew we had been...[SIGNIFICANT PAUSE].

MARY: There's one thing he doesn't know. That you swore never to see me again.

ROSY: He said... that I would die before dawn.

MARY: You know very well that he won't come back here. You can believe that. He only said that to scare you.

ROSY: Mary! Don't forget that I was the one who turned him in! And he knows it. I am afraid!

MARY: You're not alone, Rosy. You have no reason to be afraid. I'll stay with you tonight and tomorrow we'll go to the police. The telephone can ring as much as it likes. Be so kind as to find me a nightgown. I'll go make us some camomile tea.

*Rosy spies Mary in the kitchen holding a butcher knife. She gasps.*

ROSY: Why the knife?

MARY: One never knows! Still afraid?

ROSY: No. I feel safe with you.

MARY: That's better. Come on, let's go to bed.

### BLACK SABBATH

Rosy, take your time. Let's hear the story.

I can barely talk about it, it's so awful.

You say he threatened you? How could he?

I tell you he's alive. I know it was him. I heard him on the telephone. He spoke in a nightmarish voice and he said such frightening things to me. He knows everything I do, move by move. Even when I took off my dress and was wearing a dressing gown. How is it possible, Mary? He died three months ago! We both knew about the same time. I'm sorry, Mary. Sorry for what happened. I never meant to hurt you. But you must help me now. You can't imagine how he sounded. It was terrifying. He's after me.

Frank is dead. You're distraught—imagining things.

He's alive, I tell you. Why, he knows I called you! He called me right afterwards.

Don't. Don't think about it. Listen to me. What you need is to go to bed and relax.

He said... that I would die before dawn.

[LAUGHS] Probably a crank call. And if it were him, why would he want to kill you?

Mary, I was the one who turned him in! And he knew it! I'm scared.

You are all right. I'm here now. And tomorrow we'll go together to the police. Now. No one can call you. Get me a nightgown now, and I'll go make us something to drink.

What are you doing? What's that for?

You never know. Still scared?

I... feel better now.

I'm glad. Get to bed.



*Mary prepares the tea.*

ROSY: What's that?

MARY: Poison—from Frank. Only a seasoning, you idiot! Here, drink it down. All of it this time. You have too much imagination, Rosy. Come on, hurry up. Drink.

What's that?

Poison—from Frank. It's a tranquilizer. There! You drink this and you won't feel a thing.

Most of Billitteri's work on the episode was accomplished stateside during post-production, as he rewrote the dialogue of several key scenes, deleting its homoerotic subtext and adding a "ghost" to make the story more enjoyable for juveniles.

Roberto Nicolosi's original score for "The Telephone" is not significantly different from the Les Baxter soundtrack imposed on the US version; it's simply better played. Using a five-piece jazz ensemble of saxophone, bass, trombone, vibes, and drums, Nicolosi accented story with suggestively

sinful underpinnings, alternatively romantic and menacing, arriving at a more appropriately intimate mood than Baxter achieved.

Rescored, rewritten, and sandwiched between two masterpieces, "The Telephone" has always seemed the most vulnerable chapter of Mario Bava's early directorial career—at least, from the standpoint of English-speaking critics. True, as presented in **BLACK SABBATH**, "The Telephone" makes absolutely no sense (a supernatural entity slain by a knife?), but the original version excuses most of the



*Frank (Gustavo de Nardo) strangles Mary with one of her lover's own stockings.*

#### MARY'S LETTER

*Next morning. Rosy is sprawled sideways on the bed. CAMERA PANS LEFT and DOLLIES across the room to a small writing table, where Mary is writing a letter. In the European version, the shot is a long and unbroken take—unlike the AIP version, which bluntly CUTS from Rosy to the end of the DOLLY-IN on Mary. CUT to a CLOSE SHOT of the letter she is writing.*

#### THE THREE FACES OF FEAR

*"Dear Rosy, I'm so sorry to have caused you such a fright, but it was the only way I had of making you break your oath, which had caused me such pain. It was the news of Frank's escape that gave me the idea. His voice... that was me. Don't hold it against me."*

#### BLACK SABBATH

*"Dear Rosy, I put the tranquilizer in your tea not only because you needed it, but also because it would give me the opportunity to consult a psychiatrist about your disturbed state of mind before you could awake. These hallucinations about Frank's being alive—talking to you—threatening your life—are obviously signs that you need help."*

## FRANK'S ARRIVAL

### THE THREE FACES OF FEAR

*The scene of Frank strangling Mary contains two shots cut from the AIP version:*

- Following the CLOSE SHOT of Mary's face while being strangled, there is a MEDIUM SHOT of Frank violently choking her and lowering her limp body to the floor. CUT to a CLOSE SHOT of Rosy recoiling in terror on the bed. CUT to MEDIUM SHOT of Mary dead on the floor, Frank poised above her. He releases his grip on her.
- Frank grabs a fistful of Mary's hair and mutters —

FRANK: Ugh! Filthy bitch! You're always hanging on my sleeves!

*Frank looks at Rosy menacingly. He comes toward her. No dialogue.*

*Frank is stabbed by Rosy through bedsheet. Camera PANS left, rotates on phone, continues left to rest on MEDIUM SHOT of Mary's dead body.*

*No dialogue.*

*No zoom.  
No scream.*

### BLACK SABBATH

ROSY: No! No, Frank! It's not you! You're dead! Don't you understand? You're dead!!

*Camera PANS left, rotates on phone, still off the hook, then continues left to rest on medium shot of Mary's dead body. We hear Frank's voice filtering through the telephone, still off the hook.*

VOICE: Rosy! You can't kill me. I'll always be here. Close to you. I'll be talking to you every night, no matter where you are. I'll be calling you. On the telephone!

*ZOOM-FREEZE on telephone.  
Offscreen, Rosy screams.*

episode's apparent weaknesses. (One still wonders how Mary was able to reach Rosy's apartment so quickly after phoning her...)

Thus an accepted "problem play," to crib a Shakespearian term, becomes the actual foundation of the next two decades of the Italian cinema of suspense. In a 1964 review of **BLOOD AND BLACK**

**LACE** for THE MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN, critic Tom Milne jokingly noted that this greatest of all *gialli* might well note the onset of a new genre that could be called "the red telephone movie." Milne didn't realize that Bava had already inaugurated this genre with another film... *about* a red telephone.



## The Wurdalak

The film's extended second story, "The Wurdalak," is the best remembered, presenting what is perhaps the last great performance by Boris Karloff in a traditional horror role.

The young Vladimir d'Urfe (Mark Damon) is travelling on horseback through the countryside when he finds a beheaded corpse, stabbed in the heart with a handsome dagger. He extracts the blade as a souvenir and rides on, finding shelter that night at a country cottage where everyone is tensely awaiting the return of the family patriarch, who swore to kill the dreaded wurdalak Olibek, warning his children not to trust him unless he returns before midnight. Vladimir notices a dagger missing from the wall, where the one he found fits perfectly, identifying the corpse as Olibek. The patriarch, Gorka (Boris Karloff), arrives shortly after midnight with a wound in his chest. He is pale and changed, demanding that his sons put his howling dog to death and hang Olibek's severed head from the gatepost. Is he now a wurdalak or not? That night, Gorka shows his true colors by murdering his son Pietro and abducting his tiny grandson Ivan. In one of the most heart-rending sequences in the genre, the boy returns home as one of the undead, calling to his mother, the woman uses the dagger to kill her husband in order to reach her son — finding Gorka at the door instead. As the family succumbs to vampirism, Vladimir escapes with Gorka's attractive daughter Sdenka (Susy Andersen), the two of them finding shelter in the ruins of a chapel. The undead family appears, luring Sdenka back with assurances of love. Vladimir searches for her, eventually finding her in her old room at the cottage. Her eyes have an eerie, otherworldly cast. After indulging him with a kiss, Sdenka bites Vladimir's throat and we see Gorka, his daughter-in-law, and little Ivan outside the bedroom window, witnesses to what is undoubtedly a wedding.

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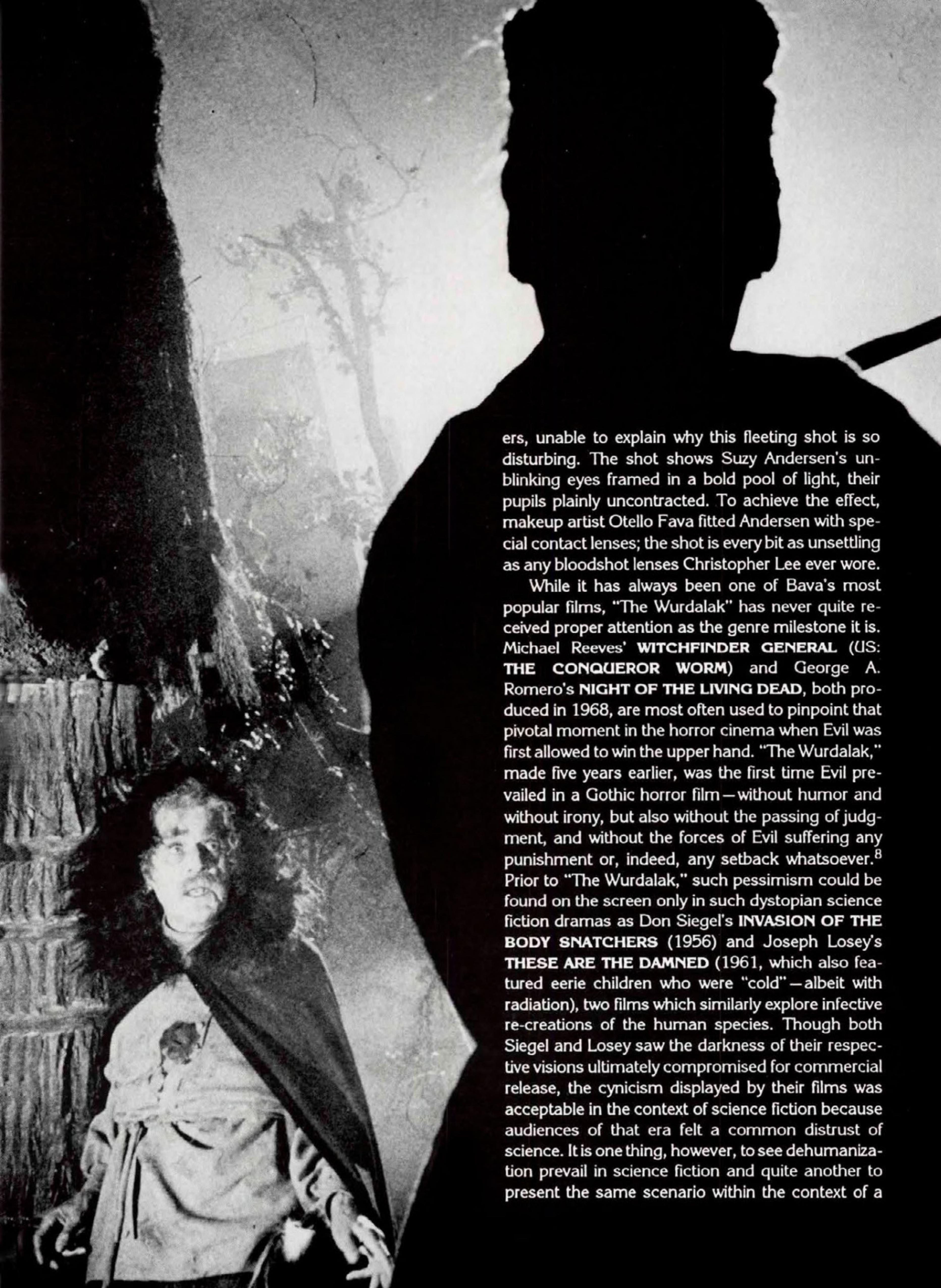
Incorrectly attributed to the non-existent "Ivan Tolstoy" in Karloff's introduction, this episode is in fact an adaptation of *La Famille du Wurdalak* ("The Family of the Wurdalak"), written in French by the Russian Count Alexei Constantinovich Tolstoi (1817-1875).<sup>6</sup> "A wurdalak," we are told, "is a vampire who drinks the blood of those [whom] they love

the best." Ironically, Bava himself was raised in ignorance of vampires. "As a child, I remember the maid telling us fables about Sardinian and Sicilian bandits that frightened me, but I never heard of a vampire," He once said. "In our country, the sun drives away such things." To arrive at his conception of a wurdalak, Bava explained that "I studied myself and, little by little, found that certain images simply came by themselves, that one has them deep inside."<sup>7</sup>

As with Steve Reeves' dramatic uprooting of a tree in **HERCULES** or Barbara Steele's hound-flanked entrance in **THE MASK OF SATAN**, Bava designed a remarkable presentation of Karloff in this segment, perhaps the best the actor had since his "reverse walk-on" in James Whale's **FRANKENSTEIN** (1931). As Gorka's family discusses whether the late hour portends his death, we cut to a crabbed, silhouetted figure in longshot crossing a broadly symbolic bridge toward the family cottage. Responding to the howls of their dog, the family scramble outside. The camera pans around the interloper, moving in close shot from a pair of dusty boots straggling up the road to behind his back. We watch breathlessly as this dark, hunched, larger-than-life silhouette ambles inexorably back into the bosom of its family. When Gorka turns his face to the camera, Bava zooms into Karloff's familiar features, as attentive as the family toward divining the slightest hint as to his present nature. We watch in mounting horror as the patriarch's homecoming soliloquy deteriorates from "I'm wounded!" to "I'm hungry...," as he demands one moment that his dog be shot into silence, and in the next to fondle his grandchild.

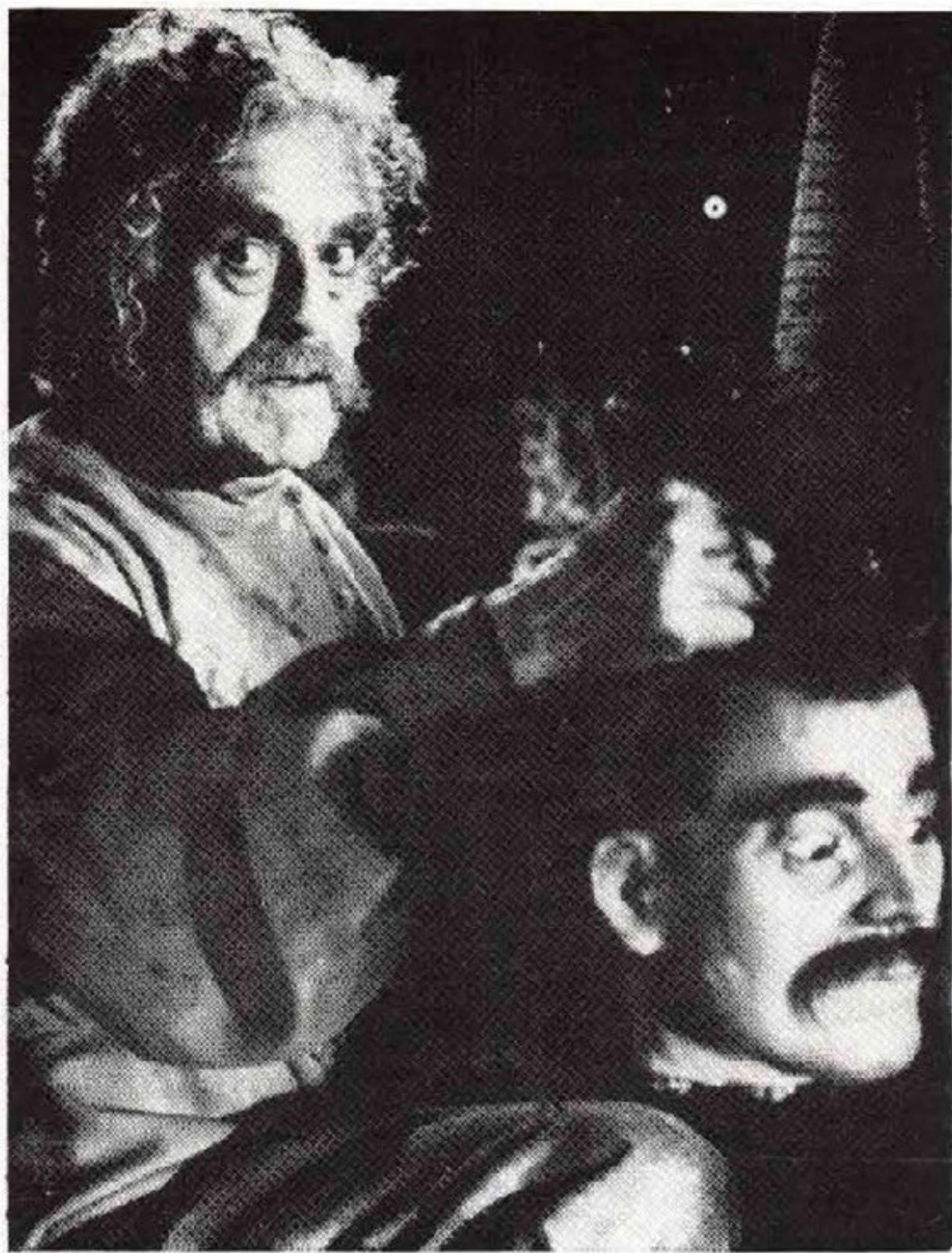
Unlike the interior episodes which flank it, the script for "The Wurdalak" featured several exterior shots enabling Bava to indulge himself in his love for camera tricks. As usual, to retain the utmost control over his environment, Bava shot most of these exteriors indoors at Titanus Studios, where **THE MASK OF SATAN** was also filmed. The ruined chapel in which Vladimir and Sdenka seek shelter is, in its interior establishing shots, part studio construction (screen left) and part glass shot (screen right), which Bava prepared by pasting a photo of ruins on a sheet of glass. In one shot, Karloff actually fits his head into the narrow space between the camera and the glass to present the illusion of looking around!

The brief image of Sdenka's eyes when Vladimir finds her hiding in her bed has haunted many view-



ers, unable to explain why this fleeting shot is so disturbing. The shot shows Suzy Andersen's unblinking eyes framed in a bold pool of light, their pupils plainly uncontracted. To achieve the effect, makeup artist Otello Fava fitted Andersen with special contact lenses; the shot is every bit as unsettling as any bloodshot lenses Christopher Lee ever wore.

While it has always been one of Bava's most popular films, "The Wurdalak" has never quite received proper attention as the genre milestone it is. Michael Reeves' **WITCHFINDER GENERAL** (US: **THE CONQUEROR WORM**) and George A. Romero's **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**, both produced in 1968, are most often used to pinpoint that pivotal moment in the horror cinema when Evil was first allowed to win the upper hand. "The Wurdalak," made five years earlier, was the first time Evil prevailed in a Gothic horror film—without humor and without irony, but also without the passing of judgment, and without the forces of Evil suffering any punishment or, indeed, any setback whatsoever.<sup>8</sup> Prior to "The Wurdalak," such pessimism could be found on the screen only in such dystopian science fiction dramas as Don Siegel's **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS** (1956) and Joseph Losey's **THESE ARE THE DAMNED** (1961, which also featured eerie children who were "cold"—albeit with radiation), two films which similarly explore infective re-creations of the human species. Though both Siegel and Losey saw the darkness of their respective visions ultimately compromised for commercial release, the cynicism displayed by their films was acceptable in the context of science fiction because audiences of that era felt a common distrust of science. It is one thing, however, to see dehumanization prevail in science fiction and quite another to present the same scenario within the context of a



horror film—particularly a Gothic horror film, in which the aspect of fable touches us on a vulnerable, primal level. In "The Wurdalak," Mario Bava was not saying that Science might fail Man someday, but portraying a Manichean "Once Upon a Time" in which Good itself was overthrown by the forces of Evil. The message which Siegel and Losey had failed to circulate as speculation finally got out in the guise of a *fait accompli*, primarily because AIP was too distracted by the film's allusions to homosexuality to notice any other subversive content.<sup>9</sup>

The episode was to influence the genre in other ways, as well. In **THE MASK OF SATAN**, Bava had briefly hinted at incestuous predation in a brief—and unfulfilled—scene between Princess Katia and her undead father Vajda ("You musn't call me [Father]... no more can I mean that to you!"). However, in "The Wurdalak," the premise is more than fulfilled; the unspeakable graduates into powerfully dramatized acts of incest and pedophilia. For the first time, the decimation of a family structure by vampirism is documented; an angle for which Peter Sasdy's **TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA** received much acclaim in 1970, though the implications of that later film were far less harrowing.

*Opposite: Gorka appeals to his daughter-in-law (Rika Dialina, silhouetted) in a scene apparently deleted from the final cut of "The Wurdalak."*

One almost hesitates to use the word "evil" to describe Gorka's campaign against his family, because he seems driven by love to reclaim them, not bloodlust. Bava observes the phenomenon with great sympathy for his characters and with scientific detachment for the goals of their guiding virus. As Gorka's family move one by one beyond the veil to join him, the viewer is disturbed to find his own loyalties shifting, as it becomes apparent that the family is not being destroyed—merely reinvented. Though not an official remake, David Cronenberg's feature debut **THEY CAME FROM WITHIN** (aka **SHIVERS**, 1976), follows Bava's film with remarkable fidelity. Cronenberg's film, set in a modern highrise apartment, begins with the arrival of a new tenant, then documents the unit's infestation by sexually-transmitted parasites. As in "The Wurdalak," families infect themselves (even their children) before branching out, social structures disintegrate and, finally, the infected are not destroyed but *recreated* by the disease. Like Bava's film, Cronenberg ends **THEY CAME FROM WITHIN** with a darkly triumphant kiss. The casting of Barbara Steele in a supporting role only accentuates the debt, and nominates "The Wurdalak" as the true starting point of what we know today as venereal horror.

To understand that "The Wurdalak" worked too well, one has only to examine its presentation in the context of **BLACK SABBATH**. Arkoff and Nicholson ordered several changes for this episode, in order to reduce its unusually high shock value. For example: at the moment when Gorka removes the severed head of the undead Olibek—the trophy of his hunt—from his traveling sack, **THREE FACES** holds the shot, until Karloff produces the head—an effective wax prop sculpted by Mario's father, Eugenio (1886-1966)—and displays it at such an angle that its eyes stare *directly* into the camera.<sup>10</sup> **SABBATH** eliminates Olibek's head from the shot by enlarging and thus cropping the image; note the sudden increase of grain in the image. Seconds later, when the head is shown dangling from the gatepost by its long, black hair, **THREE FACES** shows the head being buffeted about by the wind in slow motion, while **SABBATH** substitutes an abbreviated take projected at normal speed. "The Wurdalak" also forfeited a few throat wounds (particularly in the scene in which the undead family pleads with Sdenka to return), and a full-length view of the blindfolded corpse of little Ivan, laid out inside the cottage beside his murdered Uncle Pietro.

To ears raised on Les Baxter's soundtrack, encountering Roberto Nicolosi's string orchestrations in this segment for the first time is an immense pleasure. Whereas Baxter's music never leaves **SAB-**



*Above: Mario Bava whispers encouragement to an unidentified actress as she is prepared for a pivotal role in "The Drop of Water." Helping her into the mask is head sculptor Eugenio Bava.*

*Opposite: Nurse Chester (Jacqueline Pierreux) covets the dead Medium's ring in "The Drop of Water."*

**BATH** for very long, Nicolosi (as in the other episodes) understands the value of complete silence and his violins and violas are all the more ominous and sinister for the tastefulness of their placement. The choice of instruments here is equally significant, the strings evoking a sense of country while their folkish dissonance conjures images of ghostliness; Baxter's trademark use of pompous brass instruments gives "The Wurdalak" a bullish zest that is picturesque and robustly Russian, but otherwise poorly suited to the material.

## The Drop of Water

The film's final story is one of Bava's most perfect confections, a masterpiece of the short form that provides **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** with a perfect final curtain, while stopping **BLACK SABBATH** (in which it is assigned first position) cold in its tracks. "I prefer above all the horror films which

revolve around a single person," Bava told Ornella Volta. "What fascinates me is the fear of a person alone in a room, causing the objects surrounding him to inexplicably acquire life, to move dangerously around. This teaches us that the only real monsters are those we carry within ourselves." If this concept describes Bava's true artistic target, "The Drop of Water" is most assuredly it's bullseye.

One stormy night, Nurse Chester (Jacqueline Pierreux, the mother of actor Jean-Pierre Léaud) is summoned by telephone to the home of the village Medium, who died of a stroke while in a trance. She is led by the housekeeper (Milly Monti) through corridors overrun with dolls and cats, toward the bed of the lifeless, staring Medium (another of Eugenio Bava's chilling wax sculptures). While dressing the corpse for burial, the nurse covets a jewelled ring and tears it from the Medium's finger. In fear of being caught, she knocks over a glass of water. A fly lands on the Medium's finger where the ring had been. Returning home, Nurse Chester's conscience



attacks her as her apartment comes alive with the sounds of dripping water, flies, and calling cats, until an apparition of the Medium rises from her bed and compels her to suicide. Nurse Chester's body is found the next day, her own hands locked about her throat. The police notice that a ring has been torn from her finger, but her concierge (Harriet White Medin) doesn't seem to know anything about it...

● ● ●

"The Drop of Water" is told almost entirely without dialogue and is the most experimental of the episodes in its use of unorthodox color and lighting. The contribution of Giorgio Giovannini—Bava's art director on all of his *Galatea* productions—is delicious throughout **THREE FACES**, but nowhere moreso than in this episode: an oval window in Nurse Chester's apartment strobes like a beating heart, a ceiling light lowers onto a tabletop of its own eccentric accord, and pinspots of amber, violet, red and green irrationally haunt the recesses of high-ceilinged, rococo rooms. The deathbed ambience of the Medium's house is presented identically to that of Leticia Roman's aunt in **EVIL EYE**, also staged by Bava and Giovannini: the storm, the mewling cats, the staring dead eyes, even the overturned glass of water reappear in this short film with talismanic significance, like elements from a traumatic episode that may have occurred in Bava's own life.

While this deathbed looms before us, it should be noted that **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** demonstrates a meaningful consistency in the way it stages its most frightening moments in or around beds. Rosy receives her first call while undressing for bed, Mary wants to get back into Rosy's bed, where Frank is ultimately stabbed to death; Vladimir is shocked into wakefulness by sensing Gorka standing over his bed (a scene straight out of Murnau's *Nosferatu*), Gorka steals his grandson out of bed, the child's mother slays her husband in their bedroom and, later, Vladimir succumbs to the family's infection in Sdenka's bedchamber; the final story is built almost entirely around a deathbed. Each segment likewise portrays the bedroom in a different light: as a place where erotic discord erupts, where we participate in nightmares, where we die.

While "The Drop of Water" survived its exportation fairly intact, some images lost their meaning during Titra's rerecording of its soundtrack. Titra failed to preserve the meowing of the Medium's cats over one climactic moment, when Pierreux hears them behind her bedroom door. Opening the door to let them out, she sees the Medium in her own bed, then in her rocking chair with a cat in her lap. The AIP version of this scene offers no explanation for her looking behind the door—suggesting that she's a superstitious woman who expects to see a ghost. Indeed, the final shot of the climactic scene shows a cat prowling the nurse's window sill, a subtle image

Gustavo de Nardo  
(Frank in "The Telephone")  
pops up again as  
the police inspector in  
"The Drop of Water"  
to interrogate  
Harriet White Medin.





*Karloff and Bava converse in a clearly underheated makeup room at Titanus Studios.*

of *Psyche Triumphant* which has no resonance whatever in domestic prints.

This episode's original music score was very sparse indeed, a handful of atmospheric accents from Farfisa organ, kettledrums, and a cymbal scattered throughout extensive, nerve-whittling silences. The organ is particularly effective, lending an icy "fingers-across-the-blackboard" feeling to each of the Medium's reanimated appearances.

## The Happy Ending

With "The Drop of Water," Bava gave **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** one of the most unsettling final images in the history of cinema: a slow, unflinching zoom into the dead, cross-eyed stare of Nurse Chester. When the film arrived at AIP, Arkoff and Nicholson were expecting anything but a movie that left audiences staring Death in the face.

"On the last day of filming, a letter arrived from America telling us to do something to soften the movie because it was too frightening," Bava explained. "What can you possibly do on the last day? Such plans usually take a month to think through!"

Bava responded to the cable with delicious irony. The last day of filming had been devoted, in part, to shots of Boris Karloff (as Gorka) riding on horseback, transporting his tiny grandson away from the world of the living. The sets had been dismantled; only the prop horse remained. What to do?

Bava thought of something, but he was unsure of the demands his idea would make on Karloff. He was aware of the actor's long-standing arthritic condition, which had bowed his leg to the extent that a steel brace was necessary, and had organized his daily schedule so that he never worked longer than four hours each day. Karloff, then 76, had already spent more time than his health advised under the cold output of the studio fans, which ruffled his feathered collar to lend his horseback ride an illusion of speed. When Bava conveyed his idea of the new finale to Karloff, he was taken aback by the actor's enthusiasm. "Karloff kissed me," Bava recalled, "and said that, in the midst of so many ventilators, he would surely catch pneumonia—perhaps even die—but that he didn't care, because it was the first time in his life he'd had so much fun!"

And so it came to be. Italian prints of **I tre volti della paura** end with a medium close shot of Gorka



riding horseback, alone, through a forest of dead branches. The scene unfolds all in one take. Gorka slows the horse to a halt with a lusty "Whoa!" then turns to address the audience:

Well, now! We've had a wonderful time, just one great big happy family! But alas, there are no more stories to tell, and I'm afraid we must leave you now.

[HORSE BEGINS TO MOVE AWAY, AS IF TAKING GORKA AT HIS WORD.]

Whoa! [DOUBLE-TAKE, SMILES] But be careful as you make your way home! In the night, behind you, there may be more vampires... and death! [BLOWS A KISS]

Happy dreams!

[HORSE BEGINS TO MOVE; GORKA SALUTES, LAUGHS]

The End! [LAUGHS]

At this point, the camera dollies back from the charging steed's gallop through the forest to reveal the full range of falsity and ludicrousness that haunts the edges of every image ever captured by a motion picture camera. As the score swells with raucous, rinky-tink piano, we see that Karloff is bouncing astride a stuffed nag on springs, rocked by a technician squatting on the floor below its rump; that the

wind is coming from a studio fan; that the "forest" is actually a group of paunchy, middle-aged, Italian men running in pathetic circles around a small, primitive 35mm camera, holding pine branches over their heads! Fade to black.

This astounding coda is remarkable not only for what it is but, considering who conceived and executed it, what it means and represents. A man who disliked being photographed, who disliked filming on location because the chances were greater of being observed, who preferred to use an old-fashioned DeBrie camera because it had a built-in cloak to hide behind, Bava would only have conceived such a finale for one reason: he had finally achieved a film which revealed something of himself.

On a broader scale, the finale is also remarkable for the way it foreshadows Karloff's last great horror film—Peter Bogdonovich's **TARGETS** (1968)—which is usually acclaimed for offering Karloff's fans a unique glimpse of the man behind the screen's most legendary monsters. Given the Pirandello-like nature of **THREE FACES**' Italian ending, Bava deserves credit for being the first director to present Karloff on the screen as he really was.<sup>11</sup>

Needless to say, Arkoff and Nicholson had kittens when they screened Bava's solution to their perceived problem. Consequently, they concocted a finale of their own from an outtake of Gorka's horse rearing away and a closing theme, full of penny-whistles and pratfalling trombones, that sounded as if it had wandered in from a Keystone comedy.

"It was a most amusing ending, really," Karloff

told **CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN** in a 1966 interview. "Sort of getting on this rocking horse and everything. The producers in Hollywood didn't like it, and they had a very valid point. If there had been any suggestion of comedy in any of the three stories, then this would have tied-in. But there was no suggestion whatsoever, and this would have come as such a shock that [they believed] it would have destroyed the film. I don't know if they were right... [but] they know their market... and they've been extremely considerate to me. I'm grateful to them."

Bava's finale appeared only in Italian release prints, and is available today only on Nikkatsu laser-discs in Japan (Italian dialogue, Japanese subtitles). Other European versions, like France's **Les Trois Visages de la Peur**, retain the Italian format, including the original dialogue intended for "The Telephone," but delete the rocking horse finale.

True to his expectations, Karloff did in fact contract pneumonia before leaving Rome. For this reason, the Bava film is reportedly not a favorite topic of Karloff's widow. Bava himself, as befitting his personal disposition, never ceased to blame himself not only for Karloff's pneumonia but for his death in 1969 as well. "I ruined Karloff's health," he was still lamenting in 1980, the year of his own death. "I guess I wasn't much of a nursemaid."<sup>12</sup>

## A Third Ending?

In addition to AIP's fizzled finale, a third ending later surfaced at a Halloween 1971 screening of **BLACK SABBATH** at London's Victoria Station, where it shared the bill with **BLOOD AND BLACK LACE**. According to journalist David Del Valle, who happened to be in attendance, the film was the standard AIP version until the very end, when the fade-out image of the untethered horse cut to a shot of the runaway animal being jockeyed by Gorka's undead grandson, rocking with macabre laughter in the saddle!

## Conclusions

In a final irony that Bava would have appreciated, all of AIP's editorial meddling was for naught. When **BLACK SABBATH** was released in August, 1964—making its New York bow on the bottom half of a double bill with the miserable sitcom feature **McHALE'S NAVY!**—the Catholic National Legion of Decency all but condemned the film, giving it their "B" rating, indicating the presence of elements which could cause "serious harm in the areas of Christian morality and traditionally accepted moral

behavior patterns." Their objection: "The second episode of this three-part horror film ["The Telephone"] dangerously concentrates on the erotic and violent details of sadism." The Legion cited no objections to the film's portrayals of incest, infanticide, or triumphant Evil—they were wringing their hands over the episode AIP had worked so hard to clean up for popular consumption!

Mario Bava would work again with American International, but **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** marked the final chapter of his official affiliation with Galatea Films. Galatea's mogul, Lionello "Nello" Santi, had been the prime mover behind Bava's career up to this point; it was Santi who ordered Bava the cinematographer to complete the direction of such abandoned features as **CALTIKI THE IMMORTAL MONSTER** and **THE GIANT OF MARATHON**, and ultimately rewarded him with his directorial debut, **THE MASK OF SATAN**. Galatea had been funded by Santi's marriage to a wealthy heiress, which ended in divorce in 1965. Galatea lasted approximately that long, apparently expiring with Giuseppe Vari's **WAR OF THE ZOMBIES** [*Roma contra Roma*, "Rome Against Rome," 1965], to which a grateful Bava contributed a number of uncredited trick and glass shots.

Throughout the remaining six years of his life, Boris Karloff always spoke of Mario Bava and their collaboration with the highest regard. According to Christopher Lee, "I remember Boris, who did not praise lightly or easily, saying 'I would do anything for Mario Bava—I love him!'"<sup>13</sup> "Boris always spoke very highly of Mario Bava," Vincent Price remembered. "I don't know what happened to him on the one we did together [**DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS** (1966)], but perhaps it was not his fault." With Gorka, Bava provided Karloff with his last great horror characterization. A personality evenly shaded with the warmth of the man he once was and the icy temper of the thing he has become, the vulturish Gorka hobbles into the pantheon of Karloff classics.

In its original form, **THE THREE FACES OF FEAR** may well be the greatest of all horror anthologies; each segment is superbly designed, choreographed, and fascinating in its own right. Of the other classics of anthologized horror—**FLESH AND FANTASY** (1943), **DEAD OF NIGHT** (1945), **THREE CASES OF MURDER** (1954), certainly Corman's **TALES OF TERROR** and the myriad Amicus Productions which followed—each contains unforgettable segments, but on the whole they succumb to the gravity imposed on them by their weakest links.

If the same can be said of Mario Bava's self-contained trilogy, it is only because—as the film suggests—a kind of evil has prevailed.



# LES TROIS VISAGES DE LA PEUR

BORIS KARLOFF · MARK DAMON · MICHELE MERCIER  
SUSY ANDERSEN · LIDIA ALFONSI · GLAUCO ONORATO · MASSIMO RIGHI

MILLY MONTI · GUSTAVO DE NARDO et JACQUELINE PIERREUX

RÉALISATEUR MARIO BAVA

UNE CO-PRODUCTION FRANCO-ITALIENNE LYRE (PARIS) EMMEPI GALATEA (ROME)

EASTMANS COLOR - ECRAN PANORAMIQUE

**I TRE VOLTI DELLA PAURA**

in Italian with Japanese subtitles  
Nikkatsu Video Films (Japan), ¥9,800

**LES TROIS VISAGES DE LA PEUR**

VIP (France), N/A

**BLACK SABBATH**

Inter-Ocean Video (UK), £9.77  
HBO Video, \$69.95  
HBO/Image (LD), \$59.95 with *BLACK SUNDAY*

<sup>1</sup> Volta, Omella; *TERROR FANTASTIC 3* (December 1971); reprinted in *POSITIF* 138 (May 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from "Mario Bava (Regista)," a transcribed testimonial published in *LA CITTÀ DEL CINEMA* (Rome 1979).

<sup>3</sup> Medin remembers Bava as the second finest director she ever worked with (after Fellini, who directed her performance as "Edna" in *La dolce vita*, 1959), her only complaint being that Bava insisted on talking her through her "fly-watching" closeup at the end of "The Drop of Water." Bava told her exactly in which directions to look and for how long. After calling "Cut!" Bava smiled and said, "Hey, you're good!"

<sup>4</sup> Bava created this trick "magic writing" shot himself, animating Frank's elegant handwriting as it fills a beautifully-lit sheet of blank paper. It was not an insert shot filmed in the States.

<sup>5</sup> Bava's knack for color-coding visual information shines through in this shot: Mary's telephone is black, like the receiver of Rosy's otherwise red telephone; when Mary disguises her voice to call Rosy, the handkerchief she speaks through is also red.

<sup>6</sup> "The Wurdalak" was reshot by Giorgio Ferroni as *NIGHT OF THE DEVILS* [*La Notte dei diavoli*, 1971], a modern-day interpretation that is truer to Tolstoy's tale than Bava's version, at least in terms of structure. The film is available on video in America only on Spanish-language cassettes, under the title *La Noche de los Diablos*, but this is the censored version dating from its Franco-era release. Holland's Video for Pleasure label offers

an English-language version of the film with Dutch subtitles, which is uncut.

<sup>7</sup> *LA CITTÀ DEL CINEMA*, *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> I expect some dissent over this statement, but I've given it every possible consideration. There were certainly downbeat endings before, as in the cases of Tod Browning's *FREAKS* (1932) and Mark Robson's *THE SEVENTH VICTIM* (1943), but it can't be said that *Evil prevails in either film*. Of course, films like *PSYCHO* (1960) cannot be counted—Mother is incarcerated, not destroyed, victorious only over Norman—and *THE BIRDS* (1962) ends on a draw.

<sup>9</sup> Ironically, in 1968, American International told George Romero that they couldn't distribute *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* unless a more upbeat ending was filmed. The same year, they released Reeves' *WITCHFINDER GENERAL* as *THE CONQUEROR WORM* with its despairing finale intact.

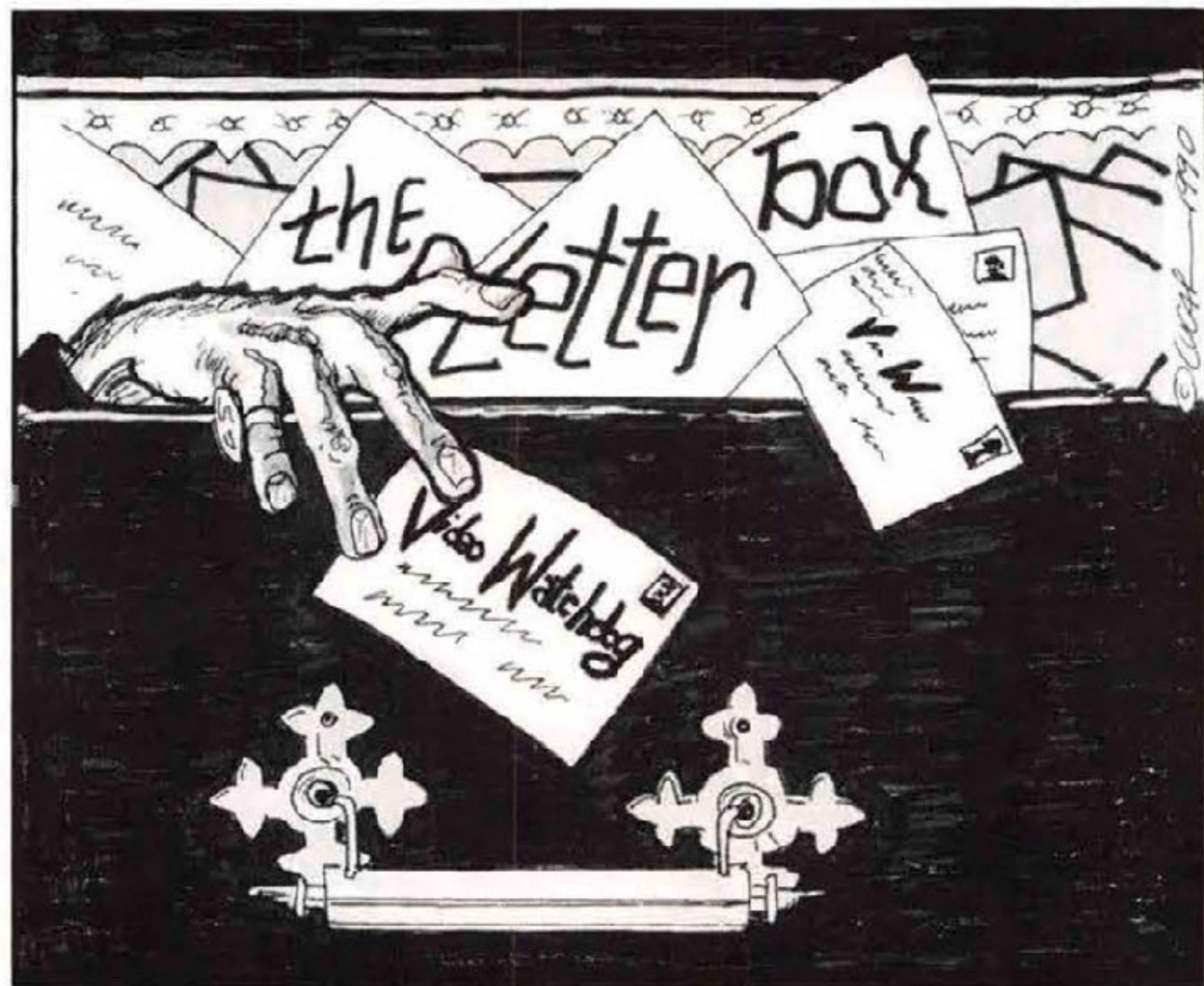
<sup>10</sup> Staring eyes are a recurring motif throughout the film. "The Telephone" begins with a voyeur's gaze tormenting Rosy, and ends with a long shot view of the strangled Mary's death stare. Many of the most frightening moments in "The Wurdalak" involve people feeling the gazes of others, behind their sleeping backs or looking at them through windows. "The Drop of Water" features a staring corpse reluctant to close its eyes, and ends with a slow, inexorable zoom into the eyes of another corpse.

<sup>11</sup> The first time on the screen, but not the first time ever. A remarkable episode of the CBS-TV series *ROUTE 66* ("Lizard's Leg and Owlet's Wing") featured Karloff, Peter Lorre and Lon Chaney as three aging horror stars. Chaney appeared as the Hunchback, the Mummy, and the Wolf Man, and Karloff made the moment complete by donning the Frankenstein Monster makeup for the first time since 1939.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted posthumously by Louis Sabad in "Un cinéaste d'outre-tombe" in *LIBÉRATION* (May 7, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Kelley, Bill: "Mario Bava died without giving full reign to his talents," Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel, May 30, 1980, p. 4.





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## WANTED: MORE LETTERS LIKE...

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In a bid for a coveted WATCH-DOG button, I am offering up this bit of ephemera for your staff to ponder.

**BLOOD MANIA** (1971) is a sleazy melodrama masquerading as a horror film that pops up regularly on independent TV channels. The star, Peter Carpenter, also made **POINT OF TERROR** (also '71) with a pre-ILSA Dyanne Thorne. While not an important film, I have seen two widely conflicting versions of this picture.

The version offered by Academy Home Video (\$19.95) contains a lot of nudity and sex that was snipped for TV, but has various sub-plots completely missing from the TV version. In the (presumably) uncut video version, Carpenter is seen loading the body of a murdered girl into the trunk of his car, returning to the house and being confronted by a blackmailer with the still-fresh corpse. In the TV version, we see Carpenter hauling the body into

the Hollywood hills and burying it—a bone of contention with the TV version, as the corpse has dirt on it!—and returning home for the same ending. Also in the TV version are long scenes of a nurse talking on the telephone, feeding potato chips to a dog, etc., that aren't in the video.

An obscure, unimportant flick, I did a bit of research on these two films and came to a dead end. Nobody seems to know what happened to Peter Carpenter or his career, as he continued to appear in countless softcore B-movies into the mid '70s before vanishing without a trace. Bill Landis, while he was doing **SLEAZOID XPRESS**, helped me in researching this topic and Stefan Jaworzyk of **SHOCK XPRESS** was set to publish my article on this before his magazine folded.

**Greg Goodsell**  
**Bakersfield, CA**

*Your button's on its way, Greg. Lucky we didn't call this magazine VIDEO XPRESS!*

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## MS. FOUND IN AN ENVELOPE

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Admit One's much-coveted, uncut copy of **THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH** is now available again—sort of. Admit One was this year's sponsor of Toronto's annual B-Movie Festival. At a 3-D screening of **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**, I was able to purchase a new copy of HoPB (recorded in HiFi and at SP mode) for \$20.00 Canadian. Although the film is not listed in Admit One's mail order catalogue, Del Tenney fans might be able to get a copy if they ask for it. A word of warning: my copy featured a number of strange color bursts and drop-outs, which suggests that Admit One's master is not holding up well to the ravages of time.

I was pleasantly surprised to find that Side 2 of Image's laser-disc of **DARIO ARGENTO'S WORLD OF HORROR** was in the CAV format, which allowed single frame access to the last 20 or so minutes. Image makes no mention of this on the sleeve.

Sinister Cinema's tape of the John Agar bomb **NIGHT FRIGHT** was apparently recorded from a TV broadcast. The picture and transfer quality are very good, but it's full of glitchy edits where commercials have been removed. I don't know what the original running time was, but this version clocks-in at 68m, suggesting that it aired after being edited to fit a 90m timeslot.

I would like to warn your readers against certain videos distributed by the Canadian distributors Pan-Canadian, Cineplex-Odeon, and Astral Video, which should not be ordered no matter how good the price:

**BAD TIMING—A SENSUAL OBSESSION** (Pan-Canadian/Cineplex Odeon, OP): A badly-damaged print, the opening credits are letterboxed, unlike the rest of the film, which isn't even scanned.

**WELCOME TO BLOOD CITY** (Pan-Canadian, SP/Interglobal, LP speed): Same as above, but with a better print and credits that aren't letterboxed; thus, all but indecipherable. Both tapes were culled from the same master.

**ELIMINATORS** (Cineplex-Odeon, OP): Bad print, mono soundtrack despite box's promise of Hi-Fi Stereo. Now available from an LP company called Auburn Video.

**HALLOWEEN** and **TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE** (Astral/Media): Both of these films were originally released by Astral Video. When Astral became the Canadian distributor for Media Home Entertainment, they simply put their inferior versions in Media's classier packaging! **HALLOWEEN** seems to have been struck from a pre-scanned (and scratchy) 16mm print, while the source print for **CHAINSAW** is so dark that the night scenes are unwatchable.

**RITUALS** (Astral): Grainy, with poor color.

**TERROR TRAIN** (Astral):

Now out-of-print, this was released here on video in 1981, years before its American release by Key Video. The print is dark and scratched, the color flat. The same transfer is now available in an LP transfer from Family Tyme Video.

**DAY OF THE DEAD** (Media/Astral): Contains more than 40 cuts, about 5m of missing footage.

One more quick note: VW #3 lists Ontario cassettes of **MAD FOXES** as being cut down to 73m. The Ontario Video Classification Catalogue times the Ontario-approved running time as 79m. The film is rated "Restricted" (our equivalent to NC-17) and carries the warning "Brutal Violence." The catalogue's running times are usually right on the money, so **MAD FOXES** may have been available uncut in Ontario at one time.

Keep up the good work!

John Charles  
Guelph, Ontario  
CANADA

*Special thanks, John, for your exhaustive and informative letter (or "epic," as you rightly described it), of which we could print only an excerpt. Keep up your own good work!*

#### ERRATA ADDENDA

Here in France, many of my friends read VIDEO WATCHDOG. They usually say, "Thank you for giving us, at last, such a precious VCR companion." Then, almost without exception, they add, "However, I noticed one small mistake..." So I'm taking this opportunity to bring some of them to your attention.

It's a general feeling that Japanese laserdiscs are more complete than others, but my friend Jean-Claude Michel disagrees. He

notes, for example, that the Japanese disc of **BLOOD AND BLACK LACE** deletes part of Claude Dantes' bathtub murder, and that **BLACK SABBATH** is missing two of Karloff's introductions. Apparently, **THE LIVING DEAD AT MANCHESTER MORGUE** is also cut—less so than the videotape, but it is still missing some gory bits.

About my "Paw Print" in VW #2 (p. 17): Jean-Pierre Jackson, film distributor and movie addict, who lived for many years in Avignon, hometown of the Chateauneuf-du-Pape vineyards (where he spent much time in earnest experimentation), tells me that they do produce a white wine, but are best known for their excellent red... and it's well-known that they don't produce a rosé. Please inform your readers at once!

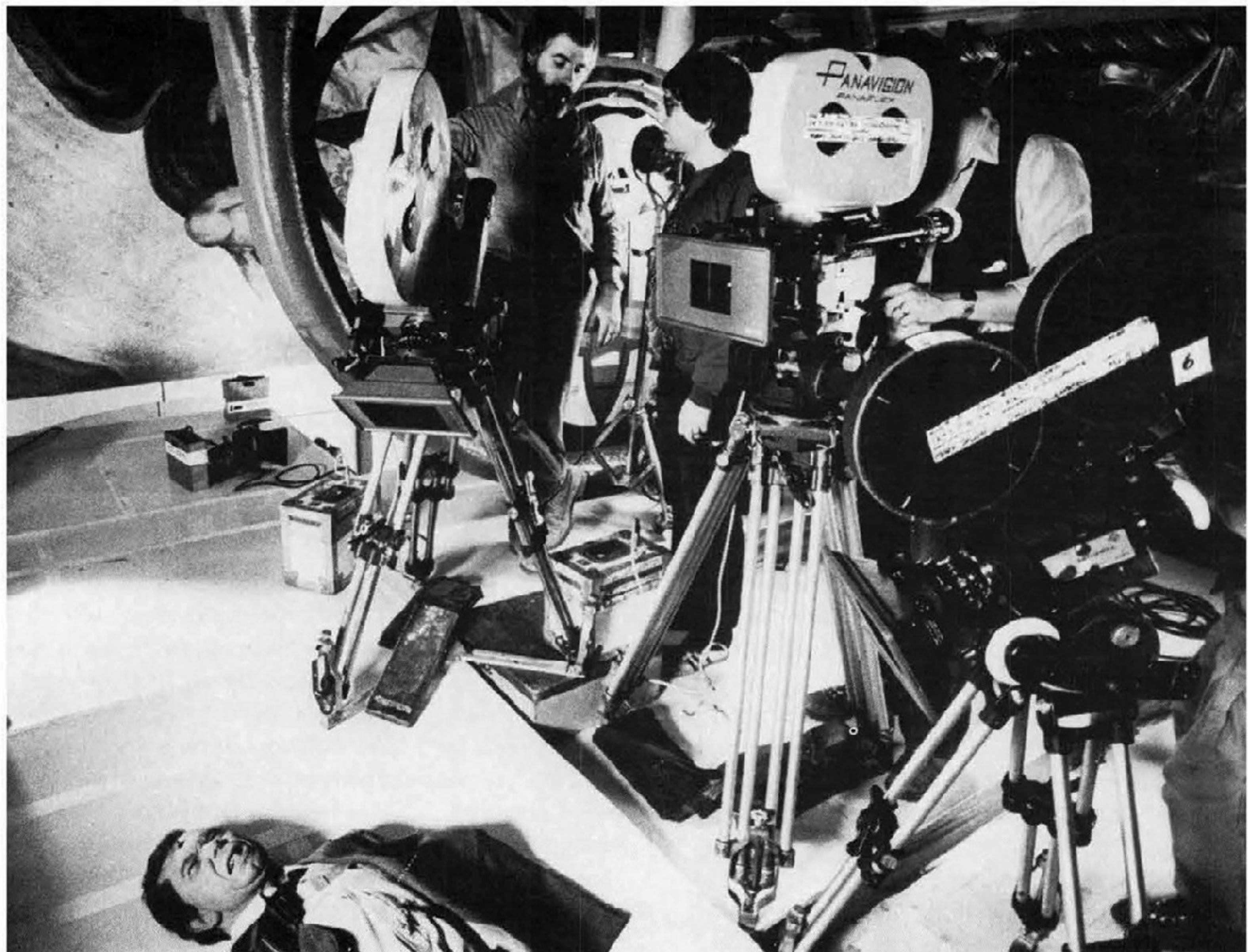
I myself noted some mistakes in VW #3, as well as some additional information I can offer:

Franco's **EUGENIE—THE STORY OF HER JOURNEY INTO PERVERSION** (p. 8) was released in France as *Les Inassoufies* ("The Insatiable Girls"), not *Les Brûlantes*, which was our title for **99 WOMEN**.

**BLOOD AND BLACK LACE** wasn't shown on the M6 Channel (sorry, my mistake) but on the Pay TV channel "Canal +," which makes a lot of difference because this indicates that, 25 years after it was made, the film is still considered too audacious for the general viewing audience.

**Vizio in Bocca** is *Razzia sur le Plaisir* ("The Pleasure Raid"), (p. 21) which was supposedly directed by one of Eurociné's Lesoeur family, but completed by Franco (who appears in the film, as well). It's abysmal.

Am very surprised to learn that **ISLAND WOMEN** wasn't a Franco film (p. 62-63), since the dialogue and names are so Francoesque ("Tago Mago Prison," for ex-



Cinematographer Mark Irwin and director David Cronenberg prepare to film the eruptive demise of Barry Convex for *VIDEODROME* (1983).

ample). Brigitte Lahaie's autobiography *MOI, LA SCAN-DALEUSE* ("I, The Scandalous One")—written long before either **DARK MISSION** or **FACELESS**—claims that she made only one film with Jess, because they quarreled during production when he proposed shooting some hardcore films with her in Portugal, when she had announced her retirement from adult films. If this "one film" wasn't **ISLAND WOMEN**, what was it? I rather think it's a Franco film, maybe partly shot by Mr. Dietrich.

(P. 63-64): I recently spoke to Chris Mitchum about **MARIMBA**, who was originally hired to star. He told me that the money disappeared just before shooting began

and that it was never made. Craven probably didn't shoot any of the picture, and I seem to remember a Craven interview in *L'ECRAN FANTASTIQUE* where he mentioned having completed the film's pre-production, but left before filming began.

Lucas Balbo  
Paris, FRANCE

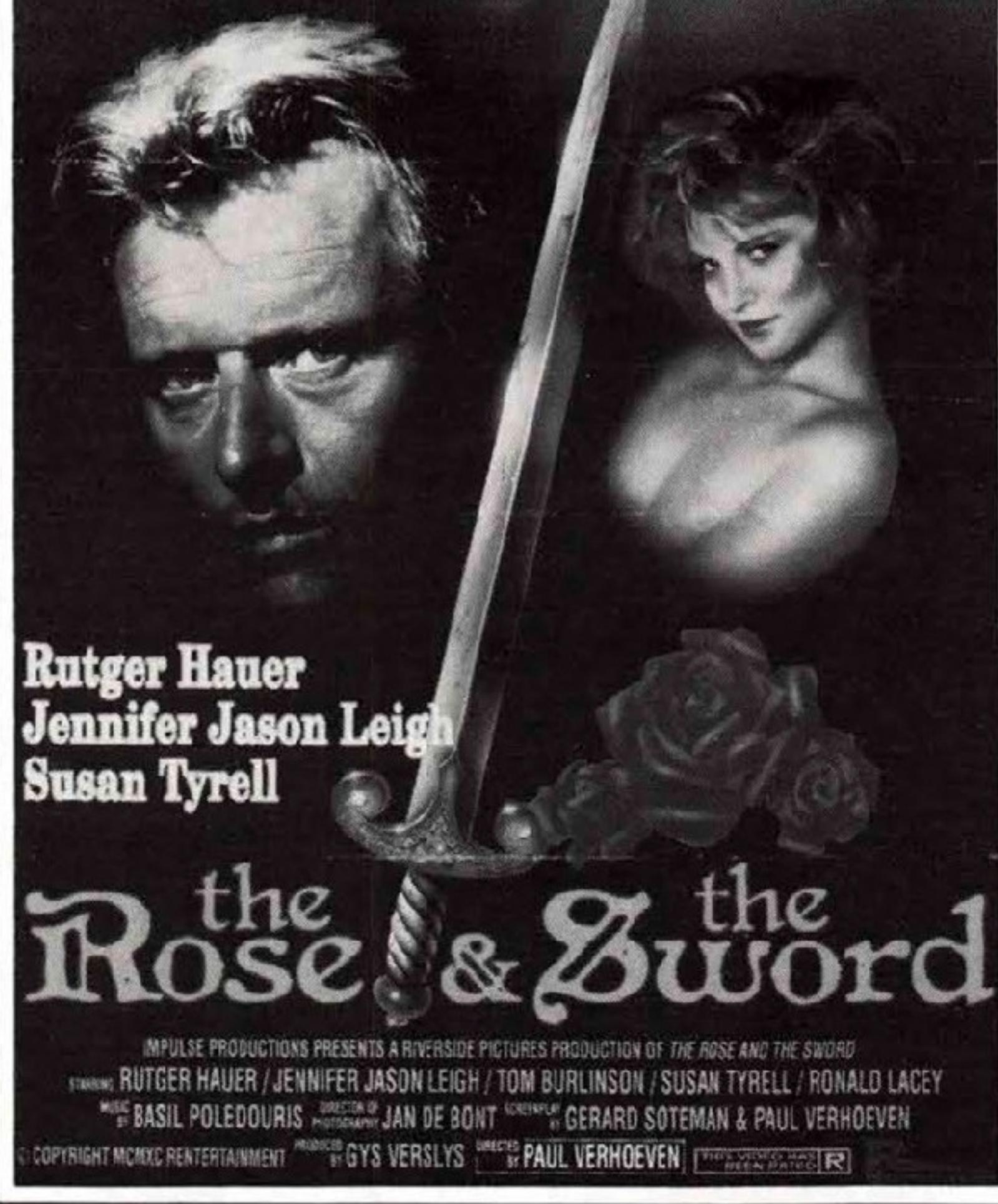
What M. Michel says about the Japanese disc of **BLOOD AND BLACK LACE** (called **SIX WOMEN FOR THE MURDERER**) is true, but it also includes a credit sequence never seen in the States, and is matted. The Japanese edition of **BLACK SABBATH**, as I explain elsewhere in this issue, doesn't exclude anything; it is an alter-

nate version. **THE LIVING DEAD AT MANCHESTER MORGUE** is called **LET SLEEPING CORPSES LIE** on Japanese tape and disc. Americans may not understand the allusion intended by "Tago Mago Prison." Tago Mago was the name of a renowned German magician... and escape artist!

## MISSING, OR JUST HALLUCINATED?

I saw David Cronenberg's **VIDEODROME** during its initial theatrical release. In it, there was a short scene in which Barry Convex explains the origin of the Accumicon helmet to Max Renn, how it was designed as "night sight"

A Medieval Spectacle From the Award-Winning  
Director of "Total Recall" and "RoboCop!"



Rentertainment's flyer for Paul Verhoeven's  
*FLESH + BL... er, THE ROSE & THE SWORD.*

equipment for the Army, but abandoned when test subjects began hallucinating while wearing it. This sequence does not appear in the unrated MCA Video release. According to the blurb on the cassette box, the video contains scenes not shown theatrically. I understand why the origin was probably dropped (the helmet probably made a lovely target for enemy snipers), but what replaced this sequence? The film barely runs 85m! If you've already written about this, I hope you won't mind repeating yourself.

**Vincent Sneed**  
**Baltimore, MD**

You must have seen an early test screening of *VIDEODROME*, Vin-

cent, as this scene was never included in Universal's release prints. The release prints (and video) make a passing reference to the "test subjects" never regaining their sanity, without explaining who these subjects were. If memory serves (I covered the making of *VIDEODROME* for *CFQ* in 1982-83), the scene was cut precisely because of test audience reaction about "what lovely targets" those glowing headpieces would have made. Contrary to what the MCA Video box says, the video version contains no complete scenes not included in theatrical prints, only individual images: a Black man whose genitals are shocked during a "Videodrome" broadcast; a

shot of Max piercing Nicki's ears during sex; an extended tracking shot of Max and Nicki making love on the "Videodrome" set (which was shortened by dissolve in the R-rated version); and a longer view of Barry Convex's eruptive death. Cronenberg was writing the film as it was being made, so many scenes were written and shot for the film which did not survive the final cut—because the ever-mutating scenario shot off into different directions and excluded them.

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## "A" TITLES AND "A" WORDS

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I am a video buff as well as a store owner, and I'm constantly amazed at the dishonesty in this business. I recently received a flyer from Impulse Productions announcing **THE ROSE & THE SWORD**. The movie was obviously a retitling of Paul Verhoeven's **FLESH + BLOOD** (1985), which Vestron released a few years ago and has had frequent showings on cable TV. A couple of days after the flyer arrived, a salesman tried to sell me **THE ROSE & THE SWORD** as "a hot new A-title." When I told him what I thought, he called me an asshole and slammed the phone down!

On the other side of the flyer, I found many other Impulse retitlings: **H.O.T.S.** is **T&A ACADEMY**, **LOVE LETTERS** is

PASSION PLAY, etc. I am one video dealer who cares about such things.

**Kevin Cleary**  
VIDEO ELECTRONICS INC.  
Madison Heights, VA

*Impulse Productions doesn't re-title everything they release, but almost everything. Their BLACK VAMPIRE is actually BLOOD COUPLE (described in detail in our GANJA & HESS coverage in VW #3), BLACK WEREWOLF is THE BEAST MUST DIE, YOUNG L.A. NURSES 2 is PRIVATE DUTY NURSES, and CHROME HEARTS is C.C. AND COMPANY with Joe Namath and Ann-Margret! They handle THE VELVET VAMPIRE under its real title, but the box art on that title cites their company label as "On Line Cinema"!*

## THE COLOUR OUT OF TAPE

**BLOOD ISLAND**, the Ace Video retitling of **THE SHUTTERED ROOM** mentioned in VW #2 [P. 8] is an edited print. It opens with 23s of credits identifying Oliver Reed, Carol Lynley, Gig Young, and the title. It then deletes the entire pre-credit sequence involving the attack on Lynley as a child, all of the original opening credits, and a roadside conversation between Lynley and Young before arriving at the mainland dock to be ferried over to the island. These cuts total 7m 57s! The total running time of **BLOOD ISLAND** is 92m, so the rest of the film appears to be intact. Also, compared to a local broadcast recording I recently made, the print used for the Ace transfer has washed-out color. Since most TV prints of **THE SHUTTERED ROOM** are complete and obviously struck from superior source materials, I'd suggest that collectors pass on **BLOOD ISLAND**.

Lastly, my copy of Republic's **COUNT DRACULA** runs 96m 24s, contrary to what the packaging reports. It appears that this is the complete version.

**Mark Bryan**  
Everett, WA

## FINICKY ABOUT FENECH

Do you have any info on the film released by Regal and Saturn as **BLADE OF THE RIPPER**? In one of your columns, you cited it as **NEXT!**, but Barry Kaufman disputes this. HELP!

**Lorne Marshall**  
Glen Burnie, MD

*I stand by my research. **BLADE OF THE RIPPER** is a retitled, censored, and almost unwatchably grainy version of Luciano Martino's **NEXT! /Lo strano vizio della Signora Ward**, "The Strange Visions of Mrs. Ward," 1971, which Mahon Pictures released in the States circa 9/72. (Compare the shower murder in the video to the still accompanying its review in the Spring 1972 issue of CINEFANTASTIQUE if you don't believe me.) The title was changed to **THE NEXT VICTIM** for some locations, which was evidently used as an "aka" for another Edwige Fenech film, Independent-International's **THEY'RE COMING TO GET YOU** (also '72).*

## DON'T KNOCK THE BLOCK?

There has been a lot of hype recently about Blockbuster Video not carrying unrated and/or extremely gory horror films. I am pleased to say that the two Blockbuster stores in my area do carry these kinds of films! On my last visit, I actually saw three unrated copies of **FRANKENHOOKER** and

2 unrated copies of **LUTHER THE GEEK**; both selections were picked clean. A manager at one of these stores said that as long as they rent well, they will stay. So Blockbuster Video may have some hope after all!

**Bill Knight**  
Coplay, PA

*Before you start a fan club, Bill, bear in mind that there are two different kinds of Blockbuster Video stores, the corporate-owned and the franchised. The latter tend to be freer about the kinds of films they stock—we've even heard about one store that stocks **VIDEO WATCHDOG!**—that is, until Blockbuster decided to ban all NC-17 titles from **all** of their stores. **VIDEO BUSINESS** journalist Betsy Niesyn reported (1/25/91) that the ban may have been inspired by a letter-writing campaign spearheaded by Donald Wildmon's American Family Association, an allegation which Blockbuster obviously denies. Whatever the inspiration, Blockbuster VP Ron Castell was quoted as saying that all previously purchased NC-17 tapes—like Peter Greenaway's **THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE & HER LOVER** and Pedro Almodóvar's **TIE ME UP, TIE ME DOWN**—would be "destroyed." Not "sold," not "returned".... **destroyed**. If anyone reading this is a Blockbuster member, we hope you'll complain about this decision to your local manager. We also hope that you'll make it easier for video companies to stand up to such pressure tactics by sharing your patronage with other, locally-owned video rental businesses. Mom & Pop shops are hurting these days. Chances are, they'll be so happy to get your business, they might even build-on a special Lucio Fulci wing just to please you!*



# "THE PAW IS LAW!"

—RICHARD SARNO, BILLERICA MA

No. 1, 1990  
Jess Franco  
Interview,  
Videography and  
Essay, Bissette on  
CUT & RUN, CARNIVAL  
OF SOULS, Rod  
Serling, Venezuelan  
Video Safari.



No. 2, 1990  
Annotated TWIN  
PEAKS, Dubbing the  
K. Gordon Murray  
movies, Joe Dante  
movies—the TV versions,  
THE EVIL DEAD,  
Francis Coppola.  
**SOLD OUT!**

No. 3, Jan/Feb 1991  
GANJA & HESS, BLOOD COUPLE,  
ALIENS: SPECIAL EDITION, Pupi  
Avati, Alfred Hitchcock &  
PSYCHO.

No. 4, Mar/Apr 1991  
BLUE VELVET Missing Scenes,  
Francis Coppola's lost thriller Part 1,  
Narciso Ibañez Serrador,  
Nicolas Roeg, Public Domain Debate.

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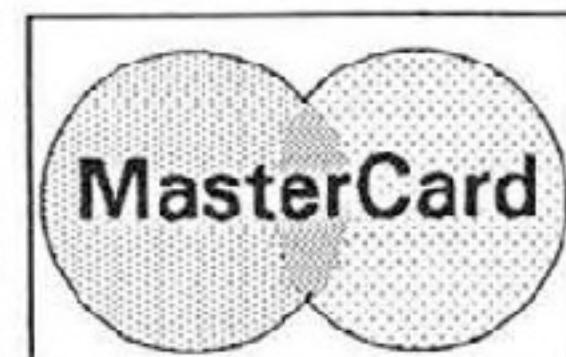
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